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THE
POEMS AND PLAYS

OF
JAMES THOMSON.



COMPLETE EDITION.

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15

SPRING.

Et nunc omnis ager, nunc omnis parturit arbos,
Nunc frondent silvæ, nunc formosissimus annus.—VIRG.

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE COUNTESS OF HERTFORD.

MADAM,

I have always observed that, in addresses of this nature, the general taste of the world demands ingenious turns of wit, and disguised artful periods, instead of an open sincerity of sentiment flowing in a plain expression. From what secret impatience of the justest praise, when bestowed on others, this often proceeds, rather than a pretended delicacy, is beyond my purpose here to inquire; but, as nothing is more foreign to the disposition of a soul sincerely pleased with the contemplation of what is beautiful and excellent, than wit and turn, I have too much respect for your Ladyship's character, either to touch it in that gay trifling manner, or venture on a particular detail of those truly amiable qualities of which it is composed. A mind exalted, pure, and elegant—a heart overflowing with humanity, and the whole train of virtues thence derived, that give a pleasing spirit to conversation—an engaging simplicity to the manners, and form the life to harmony—are rather to be felt and silently admired than expressed. I have attempted, in the following poem, to paint some of the most tender beauties and delicate appearances of Nature, how much in vain your Ladyship's taste will, I am afraid, but too soon discover; yet would it still be a much easier task to find expression for all that variety of colour, form, and fragrance which enrich the Season I describe, than to speak the many nameless graces and native riches of a mind capable so much at once to relish solitude and adorn society. To whom then could these sheets be more properly inscribed than to you, MADAM, whose influence in the world can give them the protection they want, while your fine imagination and intimate acquaintance with *Rural Nature* will recommend them with the greatest advantage to your favourable notice? Happy, if I have hit any of those images and correspondent sentiments, your calm evening walks in the most delightful retirement have oft inspired. I could add too, that as this poem grew up under your encouragement, it has therefore a natural claim to your patronage. Should you read it with approbation, its music shall not droop; and should it have the good fortune to deserve your smiles, its roses shall not wither. But, where the subject is so tempting, lest I begin my poem before the dedication is ended, I here break short and beg leave to subscribe myself with the highest respect, MADAM,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

JAMES THOMSON.

ARGUMENT.

The subject proposed. Inscribed to the Countess of Hertford. The season is described as it affects the various parts of nature, ascending from the lower to the higher; with digressions arising from the subject. Its influence on inanimate matter, on vegetables, on brute animals, and lastly on man; concluding with a dissuasive from the wild and irregular passion of love, opposed to that of a pure and happy kind.

Come gentle Spring, ethereal mildness, come,
And from the bosom of yon dropping cloud,
While music wakes around, veil'd in a shower
Of shadowing roses, on our plains descend.

O Hertford! fitted or to shine in courts
With unaffected grace, or walk the plain
With innocence and meditation join'd
In soft assemblage, listen to my song,
Which thy own season paints, when Nature all
Is blooming and benevolent, like thee.

And see where surly Winter passes off,
Far to the north, and calls his ruffian blasts:
His blasts obey, and quit the howling hill,
The shatter'd forest and the ravaged vale,
While softer gales succeed, at whose kind touch,
Dissolving snows in livid torrents lost,
The mountains lift their green heads to the sky.
As yet the trembling year is unconfirm'd,

And Winter oft at eve resumes the breeze,
Chills the pale morn, and bids his driving sleets
Deform the day delightful : so that scarce
The bittern knows his time, with bill ingulf'd
To shake the sounding marsh ; or from the shore
The plover, when to scatter o'er the heath,
And sing their wild notes to the listening waste.

At last from Aries rolls the bounteous sun,
And the bright Bull receives him. Then no more
The expansive atmosphere is cramp'd with cold ;
But, full of life and vivifying soul, [thin,
Lifts the light clouds sublime, and spreads them
Fleecy, and white, o'er all-surrounding heaven.

Forth fly the tepid airs ; and unconfined,
Unbinding earth, the moving softness strays.
Joyous, the impatient husbandman perceives
Relenting Nature, and his lusty steers [plough
Drives from their stalls, to where the well-used
Lies in the furrow, loosen'd from the frost.
There, unrefusing, to the harness'd yoke
They lend their shoulder, and begin their toil,
Cheer'd by the simple song and soaring lark,
Meanwhile incumbent o'er the shining share
The master leans, removes the obstructing clay,
Winds the whole work, and sidelong lays the glebe.

While through the neighbouring fields the sower
stalks

With measured step, and, liberal, throws the grain
Into the faithful bosom of the ground,
The harrow follows harsh, and shuts the scene.

Be gracious, Heaven ! for now laborious man
Has done his part. Ye fostering breezes, blow !
Ye softening dews, ye tender showers, descend !
And temper all, thou world-reviving sun,
Into the perfect year ! Nor ye who live
In luxury and ease, in pomp and pride,
Think these lost themes unworthy of your ear :
Such themes as these the rural Maro sung
To wide-imperial Rome, in the full height
Of elegance and taste, by Greece refined.

In ancient times the sacred plough employ'd
The kings and awful fathers of mankind :
And some, with whom compared your insect tribes
Are but the beings of a summer's day,
Have held the scale of empire, ruled the storm
Of mighty war ; then, with unwearied hand,
Disdaining little delicacies, seized
The plough, and greatly independent lived.

Ye generous Britons, venerate the plough !
And o'er your hills, and long withdrawing vales,
Let Autumn spread his treasures to the sun,
Luxuriant and unbounded. As the sea,
Far through his azure turbulent domain,
Your empire owns, and from a thousand shores
Wafts all the pomp of life into your ports,
So with superior boon may your rich soil,
Exuberant, Nature's better blessings pour
O'er every land, the naked nations clothe,
And be the exhaustless granary of a world !

Nor only through the lenient air this change,
Delicious, breathes ; the penetrative sun,
His force deep-darting to the dark retreat
Of vegetation, sets the steaming power
At large, to wander o'er the verdant earth,
In various hues ; but chiefly thee, gay green !
Thou smiling Nature's universal robe !
United light and shade ; where the sight dwells
With growing strength, and ever-new delight.

From the moist meadow to the wither'd hill,
Led by the breeze, the vivid verdure runs,

And swells, and deepens to the cherish'd eye.
The hawthorn whitens ; and the juicy groves
Put forth their buds, unfolding by degrees,
Till the whole leafy forest stands display'd
In full luxuriance to the sighing gales ;
Where the deer rustle through the twining brake,
And the birds sing conceal'd. At once array'd
In all the colours of the flushing year,
By Nature's swift and secret-working hand,
The garden glows, and fills the liberal air
With lavish fragrance ; while the promised fruit
Lies yet a little embryo unperceived
Within its crimson folds. Now from the town
Buried in smoke, and sleep, and noisome damps,
Oft let me wander o'er the dewy fields, [drops
Where freshness breathes, and dash the trembling
From the bent bush, as through the verdant maze
Of sweet-briar hedges I pursue my walk ;
Or taste the smell of dairy ; or ascend
Some eminence, Augusta, in thy plains,
And see the country, far diffused around,
One boundless blush, one white-empurpled shower
Of mingled blossoms ; where the raptured eye
Hurries from joy to joy, and, hid beneath
The fair profusion, yellow Autumn spies.

If, brush'd from Russian wilds, a cutting gale
Rise not, and scatter from his humid wings
The clammy mildew ; or, dry-blowing, breathe
Untimely frost ; before whose baleful blast
The full-blown Spring through all her foliage
Joyless and dead, a wide-dejected waste. [shrinks,
For oft, engender'd by the hazy north,
Myriads on myriads, insect armies warp
Keen in the poisoned breeze ; and wasteful eat,
Through buds and bark, into the blacken'd core,
Their eager way. A feeble race ! yet oft
The sacred sons of vengeance, on whose course
Corrosive famine waits, and kills the year.
To check this plague, the skilful farmer chaff
And blazing straw before his orchard burns ;
Till, all involved in smoke, the latent foe
From every cranny suffocated falls :
Or scatters o'er the blooms the pungent dust
Of pepper, fatal to the frosty tribe :
Or, when the evennom'd leaf begins to curl,
With sprinkled water drowns them in their nest ;
Nor, while they pick them up with busy bill,
The little trooping birds unwisely scares.

Be patient, swains ; these cruel-seeming winds
Blow not in vain. Far hence they keep repress'd
Those deepening clouds on clouds, surcharged with
That o'er the vast Atlantic hither borne, [rain,
In endless train, would quench the summer-blaze,
And, cheerless, drown the crude unripen'd year.

The north-east spends his rage ; he now shut up
Within his iron cave, the effusive south
Warms the wide air, and o'er the void of heaven
Breathes the big clouds with vernal showers distent.
At first a dusky wreath they seem to rise,
Scarce staining ether ; but by swift degrees,
In heaps on heaps, the doubling vapour sails
Along the loaded sky, and mingling deep
Sits on the horizon round a settled gloom :
Not such as wintry storms on mortals shed,
Oppressing life ; but lovely, gentle, kind,
And full of every hope and every joy,
The wish of Nature. Gradual sinks the breeze
Into a perfect calm, that not a breath
Is heard to quiver through the closing woods,
Or rustling turn the many-twinkling leaves

Of aspen tall. The uncurling floods, diffused,
 In glassy breadth, seem through delusive lapse
 Forgetful of their course. 'Tis silence all
 And pleasing expectation. Herds and flocks
 Drop the dry sprig, and, mute-imploing, eye
 The falling verdure. Hush'd in short suspense,
 The plummy people streak their wings with oil,
 To throw the lucid moisture trickling off,
 And wait the approaching sign to strike at once
 Into the general choir. Even mountains, vales,
 And forests seem, impatient, to demand
 The promised sweetness. Man superior walks
 Amid the glad creation, musing praise,
 And looking lively gratitude. At last
 The clouds consign their treasures to the fields ;
 And, softly shaking on the dimpled pool
 Prelusive drops, let all their moisture flow,
 In large effusion, o'er the freshen'd world.
 The stealing shower is scarce to patter heard
 By such as wander through the forest walks,
 Beneath the umbrageous multitude of leaves.
 But who can hold the shade, while Heaven descends
 In universal bounty, shedding herbs,
 And fruits, and flowers, on Nature's ample lap ?
 Swift Fancy fired anticipates their growth ;
 And, while the milky nutriment distils,
 Beholds the kindling country colour round.
 Thus all day long the full-distended clouds
 Indulge their genial stores, and well shower'd earth
 Is deep enrich'd with vegetable life ;
 Till, in the western sky, the downward sun
 Looks out, effulgent, from amid the flush
 Of broken clouds, gay-shifting to his beam.
 The rapid radiance, instantaneous, strikes
 The illumined mountain, through the forest streams,
 Shakes on the floods, and in a yellow mist,
 Far smoking, o'er the interminable plain,
 In twinkling myriads lights the dewy gems.
 Moist, bright, and green, the landscape laughs around.
 Full swell the woods ; their every muscle wakes,
 Mix'd in wild concert with the warbling brooks
 Increased, the distant bleatings of the hills,
 And hollow lows responsive from the vales,
 Whence blending all the sweeten'd zephyr springs.
 Meantime, refracted from yon eastern cloud,
 Bestriding earth, the grand ethereal bow
 Shoots up immense ; and every hue unfolds
 In fair proportion, running from the red
 To where the violet fades into the sky.
 Here, awful Newton, the dissolving clouds
 Form, fronting on the sun, thy showery prism :
 And to the sage-instructed eye unfold
 The various twine of light, by thee disclosed
 From the white mingling maze. Not so the boy ;
 He wondering views the bright enchantment bend,
 Delightful, o'er the radiant fields, and runs
 To catch the falling glory ; but amazed
 Beholds the amusive arch before him fly,
 Then vanish quite away. Still night succeeds,
 A soften'd shade, and saturated earth
 Awaits the morning beam, to give to light,
 Raised through ten thousand different plastic tubes,
 The balmy treasures of the former day.
 Then spring the living herbs, profusely wild,
 O'er all the deep-green earth, beyond the power
 Of botanist to number up their tribes ;
 Whether he steals along the lonely dale,
 In silent search ; or through the forest, rank
 With what the dull incurious weeds account,
 Bursts his blind way ; or climbs the mountain rock,

Fired by the nodding verdure of its brow.
 With such a liberal hand has Nature flung
 Their seeds abroad, blown them about in winds,
 Innumerable mix'd them with the nursing mould,
 The moistening current, and prolific rain.
 But who their virtues can declare ? who pierce,
 With vision pure, into these secret stores
 Of health, and life, and joy ? the food of man,
 While yet he lived in innocence, and told
 A length of golden years ; unflesh'd in blood,
 A stranger to the savage arts of life,
 Death, rapine, carnage, surfeit and disease ;
 The lord, and not the tyrant, of the world.
 The first fresh dawn then waked the gladden'd
 Of uncorrupted man, nor blush'd to see [race
 The sluggish sleep beneath its sacred beam ;
 For their light slumbers gently fumed away,
 And up they rose as vigorous as the sun,
 Or to the culture of the willing glebe,
 Or to the cheerful tendance of the flock. [sport,
 Meantime the song went round ; and dance and
 Wisdom and friendly talk, successive stole,
 Their hours away ; while in the rosy vale
 Love breathed his infant sighs, from anguish free,
 And full replete with bliss ; save the sweet pain
 That, inly thrilling, but exalts it more.
 Nor yet injurious act, nor surly deed,
 Was known among those happy sons of Heaven ;
 For reason and benevolence were law.
 Harmonious Nature too look'd smiling on :
 Clear shone the skies, cool'd with eternal gales,
 And balmy spirit all. The youthful sun
 Shot his best rays, and still the gracious clouds
 Dropp'd fatness down ; as o'er the swelling mead
 The herds and flocks, commixing, play'd secure.
 This when, emergent from the gloomy wood,
 The glaring lion saw, his horrid heart
 Was meeken'd, and he join'd his sullen joy ;
 For music held the whole in perfect peace ;
 Soft sigh'd the flute ; the tender voice was heard,
 Warbling the varied heart ; the woodlands round
 Applied their choir ; and winds and waters flow'd
 In consonance. Such were those prime of days.
 But now those white unblemish'd manners
 The fabled poets took their golden age, [whence
 Are found no more amid these iron times,
 These dregs of life ! now the distemper'd mind
 Has lost that concord of harmonious powers
 Which forms the soul of happiness ; and all
 Is off the poise within : the passions all
 Have burst their bounds ; and Reason half extinct
 Or impotent, or else approving, sees
 The foul disorder. Senseless, and deform'd,
 Convulsive Anger storms at large ; or pale,
 And silent, settles into fell Revenge.
 Base Envy withers at another's joy,
 And hates that excellence it cannot reach.
 Desponding Fear of feeble fancies full,
 Weak and unmanly, loosens every power.
 Even Love itself is bitterness of soul,
 A pensive anguish pining at the heart ;
 Or, sunk to sordid interest, feels no more
 That noble wish, that never-cloy'd desire,
 Which, selfish joy disdaining, seeks alone
 To bless the dearer object of its flame.
 Hope sickens with extravagance ; and Grief,
 Of life impatient, into madness swells,
 Or in dead silence wastes the weeping hours.
 These, and a thousand mix'd emotions more,
 From ever-changing views of good and ill,

Form'd infinitely various, vex the mind
 With endless storm : whence, deeply ranking, grows
 The partial thought, a listless unconcern,
 Cold, and averting from our neighbour's good ;
 Then dark Disgust, and Hatred, winding wiles,
 Coward Deceit, and ruffian Violence ;
 At last, extinct each social feeling, fell
 And joyless Inhumanity pervades
 And petrifies the heart. Nature disturb'd
 Is deem'd, vindictive, to have changed her course.

Hence, in old dusky time, a deluge came :
 When the deep-cleft disparting orb, that arch'd
 The central waters round, impetuous rush'd,
 With universal burst, into the gulf,
 And o'er the high-piled hills of fractured earth
 Wide dash'd the waves, in undulation vast :
 Till, from the centre to the streaming clouds,
 A shoreless ocean tumbled round the globe.

The seasons since have, with severer sway,
 Oppress'd a broken world ; the Winter keen
 Shook forth his waste of snows : and summer shot
 His pestilential heats. Great Spring, before,
 Green'd all the year ; and fruits and blossoms
 blush'd,

In social sweetness, on the self-same bough.
 Pure was the temperate air ; an even calm,
 Perpetual, reign'd, save what the zephyrs bland
 Breathed o'er the blue expanse : for then nor
 storms

Were taught to blow, nor hurricanes to rage ;
 Sound slept the waters ; no sulphureous glooms
 Swell'd in the sky and sent the lightning forth ;
 While sickly damps and cold autumnal fogs
 Hung not, relaxing on the springs of life.
 But now, of turbid elements the sport,
 From clear to cloudy toss'd, from hot to cold,
 And dry to moist, with inward-eating change,
 Our drooping days are dwindled down to nought,
 Their period finish'd ere 'tis well begun.

And yet the wholesome herb neglected dies ;
 Though with the pure exhilarating soul
 Of nutriment and health, and vital powers,
 Beyond the search of art, 'tis copious blest.
 For, with hot ravine fired, ensanguined man
 Is now become the lion of the plain,
 And worse. The wolf, who from the nightly fold
 Fierce drags the bleating prey, ne'er drunk her
 milk,

Nor wore her warming fleece ; nor has the steer,
 At whose strong chest the deadly tiger hangs,
 E'er plough'd for him. They too are temper'd high,
 With hunger stung and wild necessity,
 Nor lodges pity in their shaggy breast.
 But man, whom Nature form'd of milder clay,
 With every kind emotion in his heart,
 And taught alone to weep ; while from her lap
 She pours ten thousand delicacies, herbs,
 And fruits, as numerous as the drops of rain,
 Or beams that gave them birth : shall he, fair form !
 Who wears sweet smiles, and looks erect on
 heaven,

E'er stoop to mingle with the prowling herd,
 And dip his tongue in gore ? The beast of prey,
 Blood-stain'd, deserves to bleed : but you, ye flocks,
 What have you done ? ye peaceful people, what,
 To merit death ? you, who have given us milk
 In luscious streams, and lent us your own coat
 Against the Winter's cold ? and the plain ox,
 That harmless, honest, guileless animal,
 In what has he offended ? he, whose toil,

Patient and ever ready, clothes the land
 With all the pomp of harvest ; shall he bleed,
 And struggling groan beneath the cruel hands
 Even of the clown he feeds ? and that, perhaps,
 To swell the riot of the autumnal feast,
 Won by his labour ? Thus the feeling heart
 Would tenderly suggest : but 'tis enough,
 In this late age, adventurous, to have touch'd
 Light on the numbers of the Samian sage.
 High Heaven forbids the bold presumptuous strain
 Whose wisest will has fix'd us in a state
 That must not yet to pure perfection rise.

Now when the first foul torrent of the brooks,
 Swell'd with the vernal rains, is ebb'd away ;
 And whitening, down their mossy-tinctured stream
 Descends the billowy foam : now is the time,
 While yet the dark-brown water aids the guile,
 To tempt the trout. The well-dissembled fly,
 The rod fine-tapering with elastic spring,
 Snatch'd from the hoary steed the floating line,
 And all thy slender watery stores prepare.
 But let not on thy hook the tortured worm,
 Convulsive, twist in agonising folds ;
 Which, by rapacious hunger swallow'd deep,
 Gives, as you tear it from the bleeding breast
 Of the weak, helpless, uncomplaining wretch,
 Harsh pain and horror to the tender hand.

When with his lively ray the potent sun
 Has pierced the streams, and roused the finny race,
 Then, issuing cheerful, to thy sport repair ;
 Chief should the western breezes curling play,
 And light o'er ether bear the shadowy clouds,
 High to their fount, this day, amid the hills, [brooks ;
 And woodlands, warbling round, trace up the
 The next, pursue their rocky-channel'd maze,
 Down to the river, in whose ample wave
 Their little naiads love to sport at large.
 Just in the dubious point, where with the pool
 Is mixed the trembling stream, or where it boils
 Around the stone, or from the hollow'd bank
 Reverted plays in undulating flow,
 There throw, nice-judging, the delusive fly :
 And, as you lead it round in artful curve,
 With eye attentive mark the springing game.
 Straight as above the surface of the flood
 They wanton rise, or urged by hunger leap,
 Then fix, with gentle twitch, the barbed hook :
 Some lightly tossing to the grassy bank,
 And to the shelving shore slow-dragging some,
 With various hand proportion'd to their force.
 If yet too young, and easily deceived,
 A worthless prey scarce bends your pliant rod,
 Him, piteous of his youth and the short space
 He has enjoy'd the vital light of heaven,
 Soft disengage, and back into the stream
 The speckled captive throw. But should you lure
 From his dark haunt, beneath the tangled roots
 Of pendent trees, the monarch of the brook,
 Behoves you then to ply your finest art.
 Long time he, following cautious, scans the fly ;
 And oft attempts to seize it, but as oft
 The dimpled water speaks his jealous fear.
 At last, while haply o'er the shaded sun
 Passes a cloud, he, desperate, takes the death,
 With sullen plunge. At once he darts along,
 Deep-struck, and runs out all the lengthen'd line ;
 Then seeks the farthest ooze, the sheltering weed,
 The cavern'd bank, his old secure abode ;
 And flies aloft, and flounces round the pool,
 Indignant of the guile. With yielding hand,

That feels him still, yet to his furious course
Gives way, you, now retiring, following now,
Across the stream, exhaust his idle rage ;
Till floating broad upon his breathless side,
And to his fate abandon'd, to the shore
You gaily drag your unresisting prize.

Thus pass the temperate hours ; but when the sun
Shakes from his noon-day throne the scattering
clouds,

Even shooting listless languor through the deeps,
Then seek the bank where flowering elders crowd,
Where scatter'd wild the lily of the vale
Its balmy essence breathes, where cowslips hang
The dewy head, where purple violets lurk,
With all the lowly children of the shade :
Or lie reclined beneath yon spreading ash,
Hung o'er the steep : whence, borne on liquid wing,
The sounding culver shoots : or where the hawk,
High, in the beetling cliff, his eyry builds.
There let the classic page thy fancy lead
Through rural scenes, such as the Mantuan swain
Paints in the matchless harmony of song ;
Or catch thyself the landscape, gliding swift
Athwart imagination's vivid eye ;
Or by the vocal woods and waters lull'd,
And lost in lonely musing, in the dream,
Confused, of careless solitude, where mix
Ten thousand wandering images of things,
Soothe every gust of passion into peace ;
All but the swellings of the soften'd heart,
That waken, not disturb, the tranquil mind.

Behold yon breathing prospect bids the Muse
Throw all her beauty forth. But who can paint
Like Nature ? Can imagination boast,
Amidst its gay creation, hues like hers ;
Or can it mix them with that matchless skill,
And lose them in each other, as appears
In every bud that blows ? If fancy then
Unequal fails beneath the pleasing task,
Ah, what shall language do ? ah, where find words
Tinged with so many colours, and whose power,
To life approaching, may perfume my lays
With that fine oil, those aromatic gales,
That inexhaustive flow continual round ?

Yet, though successful, will the toil delight.
Come then, ye virgins and ye youths, whose hearts
Have felt the raptures of refining love ;
And thou, Amanda, come, pride of my song !
Form'd by the Graces, loveliness itself !
Come with those downcast eyes sedate and sweet,
Those looks demure, that deeply pierce the soul,
Where, with the light of thoughtful reason mix'd,
Shines lively fancy and the feeling heart ;
Oh come ! and while the rosy-footed May
Steals blushing on, together let us tread
The morning dews, and gather in their prime
Fresh blooming flowers, to grace thy braided hair,
And thy loved bosom that improves their sweets.

See, where the winding vale its lavish stores,
Irriguous spreads. See, how the lily drinks
The latent rill, scarce oozing through the grass,
Of growth luxuriant ; or the humid bank,
In fair profusion, decks. Long let us walk,
Where the breeze blows from yon extended field
Of blossom'd beans. Arabia cannot boast
A fuller gale of joy, than, liberal, thence
Breathes through the sense, and takes the ravish'd
Nor is the mead unworthy of thy foot, [soul.
Full of fresh verdure, and unnumber'd flowers,
The negligence of Nature, wide, and wild ;

Where undisguised by mimic Art, she spreads
Unbounded beauty to the roving eye.
Here their delicious task the fervent bees,
In swarming millions, tend : around, athwart,
Through the soft air, the busy nations fly,
Cling to the bud, and, with inserted tube,
Suck its pure essence, its ethereal soul ;
And oft, with bolder wing, they soaring dare
The purple heath, or where the wild thyme grows,
And, yellow, load them with the luscious spoil.

At length the finish'd garden to the view
Its vistas opens, and its alleys green.
Snatch'd through the verdant maze the hurried eye
Distracted wanders ; now the bowery walk
Of covert close, where scarce a speck of day
Falls on the lengthen'd gloom, protracted sweeps ;
Now meets the bending sky ; the river now
Dimpling along, the breezy-ruffled lake,
The forest darkening round, the glittering spire,
The ethereal mountain and the distant main.
But why so far excursive ? when at hand,
Along these blushing borders, bright with dew,
And in yon mingled wilderness of flowers,
Fair-handed Spring unbosoms every grace,
Throws out the snow-drop and the crocus first ;
The daisy, primrose, violet darkly blue,
And polyanthus of unnumber'd dyes :
The yellow wall-flower, stain'd with iron brown ;
And lavish stock that scents the garden round :
From the soft wing of vernal breezes shed,
Anemones : auriculas, enrich'd
With shining meal o'er all their velvet leaves ;
And full ranunculus, of glowing red.
Then comes the tulip-race, where beauty plays
Her idle freaks ; from family diffused
To family, as flies the father-dust,
The varied colours run, and, while they break
On the charm'd eye, the exulting florist marks,
With secret pride, the wonders of his hand.
No gradual bloom is wanting ; from the bud,
First-born of Spring, to Summer's musky tribes :
Nor hyacinths, of purest virgin white,
Low-bent, and blushing inward ; nor jonquils,
Of potent fragrance ; nor Narcissus fair,
As o'er the fabled fountain hanging still ;
Nor broad carnations, nor gay-spotted pinks ;
Nor, shower'd from every bush, the damask rose.
Infinite numbers, delicacies, smells,
With hues on hues expression cannot paint,
The breath of Nature, and her endless bloom.

Hail, Source of Being ! Universal Soul
Of heaven and earth ! Essential Presence, hail !
To Thee I bend the knee : to Thee my thoughts,
Continual, climb ; who, with a master-hand,
Hast the great whole into perfection touch'd.
By Thee the various vegetative tribes,
Wrapt in a filmy net, and clad with leaves,
Draw the live ether, and imbibe the dew :
By Thee disposed into congenial soils
Stands each attractive plant, and sucks and swells
The juicy tide ; a twining mass of tubes.
At Thy command the vernal sun awakes
The torpid sap, detruded to the root
By wintry winds, that now in fluent dance,
And lively fermentation, mounting, spreads
All this innumerable-colour'd scene of things.

As rising from the vegetable world
My theme ascends, with equal wing ascend,
My panting Muse ! and hark, how loud the woods
Invite you forth in all your gayest trim.

Lend me your song, ye nightingales ! oh, pour
The mazy-running soul of melody
Into my varied verse ! while I deduce,
From the first note the hollow cuckoo sings,
The symphony of Spring, and touch a theme
Unknown to fame,—the passion of the groves.

When first the soul of love is sent abroad,
Warm through the vital air, and on the heart
Harmonious seizes, the gay troops begin,
In gallant thought, to plume the painted wing,
And try again the long-forgotten strain
At first faint-warbled ; but no sooner grows
The soft infusion prevalent and wide,
Than, all alive, at once their joy o'erflows
In music unconfined. Up-springs the lark,
Shrill-voiced, and loud, the messenger of morn :
Ere yet the shadows fly, he mounted sings
Amid the dawning clouds, and from their haunts
Calls up the tuneful nations. Every copse
Deep-tangled, tree irregular, and bush
Bending with dewy moisture o'er the heads
Of the gay choristers that lodge within,
Are prodigal of harmony. The thrush
And wood-lark, o'er the kind contending throng
Superior heard, run through the sweetest length
Of notes ; when listening Philomela deigns
To let them joy, and purposes, in thought
Elate, to make her night excel their day.
The black-bird whistles from the thorny brake ;
The mellow bullfinch answers from the grove :
Nor are the linnets o'er the flowering furze
Pour'd out profusely, silent. Join'd to these
Innumerable songsters, in the freshening shade
Of new-sprung leaves their modulations mix
Mellifluous. The jay, the rook, the daw,
And each harsh pipe, discordant heard alone,
Aid the full concert : while the stock-dove breathes
A melancholy murmur through the whole.

'Tis love creates their melody, and all
This waste of music is the voice of love,
That even to birds, and beasts, the tender arts
Of pleasing teaches. Hence the glossy kind
Try every winning way inventive love
Can dictate, and in courtship to their mates
Pour forth their little souls. First, wide around,
With distant awe, in airy rings they rove,
Endeavouring by a thousand tricks to catch
The cunning, conscious, half averted glance
Of the regardless charmer. Should she seem,
Softening, the least approbance to bestow,
Their colours burnish, and, by hope inspired,
They brisk advance ; then, on a sudden struck,
Retire disorder'd ; then again approach ;
In fond rotation spread the spotted wing,
And shiver every feather with desire.

Connubial leagues agreed, to the deep woods
They haste away, all as their fancy leads,
Pleasure, or food, or secret safety prompts ;
That Nature's great command may be obey'd :
Nor all the sweet sensations they perceive
Indulged in vain. Some to the holly-hedge
Nestling repair, and to the thicket some :
Some to the rude protection of the thorn
Commit their feeble offspring. The cleft tree
Offers its kind concealment to a few,
Their food its insects, and its moss their nests.
Others apart, far in the grassy dale
Or roughening waste, their humble texture weave.
But most in woodland solitudes delight,
In unfrequented glooms or shaggy banks,

Steep, and divided by a babbling brook,
Whose murmurs soothe them all the live-long day,
When by kind duty fix'd. Among the roots
Of hazel, pendent o'er the plaintive stream,
They frame the first foundation of their domes :
Dry sprigs of trees, in artful fabric laid,
And bound with clay together. Now 'tis nought
But restless hurry through the busy air,
Beat by unnumber'd wings. The swallow sweeps
The slimy pool, to build his hanging house
Intent. And often, from the careless back
Of herds and flocks, a thousand tugging bills
Pluck hair and wool ; and oft when unobserved,
Steal from the barn a straw : till soft and warm,
Clean and complete, the habitation grows.

As thus the patient dam assiduously sits,
Not to be tempted from her tender task
Or by sharp hunger or by smooth delight,
Though the whole loosen'd Spring around her
Her sympathising lover takes his stand [blows,
High on the opposite bank, and ceaseless sings
The tedious time away ; or else supplies
Her place a moment, while she sudden flits
To pick the scanty meal. The appointed time
With pious toil fulfill'd, the callow young,
Warm'd and expanded into perfect life,
Their brittle bondage break, and come to light,
A helpless family, demanding food
With constant clamour. O what passions then,
What melting sentiments of kindly care,
On the new parents seize ! away they fly
Affectionate and undesiring bear
The most delicious morsel to their young ;
Which equally distributed, again
The search begins. Even so a gentle pair
By fortune sunk, but form'd of generous mould,
And charm'd with cares beyond the vulgar breast,
In some lone cot, amid the distant woods,
Sustain'd alone by providential Heaven,
Oft, as they weeping eye their infant train,
Check their own appetites, and give them all.

Nor toil alone they scorn : exalting love,
By the great Father of the Spring inspired,
Gives instant courage to the fearful race,
And to the simple, art. With stealthy wing,
Should some rude foot their woody haunts molest,
Amid a neighbouring bush they silent drop,
And whirring thence, as if alarm'd, deceive
The unfeeling schoolboy. Hence, around the head
Of wandering swain, the white-wing'd plover wheels
Her sounding flight, and then directly on
In long excursion skims the level lawn,
To tempt him from her nest. The wild-duck, hence,
O'er the rough moss, and o'er the trackless waste
The heath-hen flutters, pious fraud ! to lead
The hot-pursuing spaniel far astray.

Be not the Muse ashamed here to bemoan
Her brothers of the grove, by tyrant man
Inhuman caught, and in a narrow cage
From liberty confined, and boundless air.
Dull are the pretty slaves, their plumage dull,
Ragged, and all its brightening lustre lost ;
Nor is that sprightly wildness in their notes,
Which, clear and vigorous, warbles from the beech.
Oh then, ye friends of love and love-taught song,
Spare the soft tribes, this barbarous art forbear,
If on your bosom innocence can win,
Music engage, or piety persuade.

But let not chief the nightingale lament
Her ruin'd care, too delicately framed

To brook the harsh confinement of the cage.
 Oft, when returning with her loaded bill,
 The astonish'd mother finds a vacant nest,
 By the hard hand of unrelenting clowns
 Robb'd, to the ground the vain provision falls ;
 Her pinions ruffle, and, low-drooping, scarce
 Can bear the mourner to the poplar shade ;
 Where, all abandon'd to despair, she sings
 Her sorrows through the night ; and, on the bough,
 Sole-sitting, still at every dying fall
 Takes up again her lamentable strain
 Of winding woe ; till, wide around, the woods
 Sigh to her song, and with her wail resound.

But now the feather'd youth their former bounds,
 Ardent, disdain ; and, weighing oft their wings,
 Demand the free possession of the sky :
 This one glad office more, and then dissolves
 Parental love at once, now needless grown :
 Unalivish Wisdom never works in vain.
 'Tis on some evening, sunny, grateful, mild,
 When nought but balm is breathing through the
 woods,

With yellow lustre bright, that the new tribes
 Visit the spacious heavens, and look abroad
 On Nature's common far as they can see,
 Or wing, their range and pasture. O'er the boughs
 Dancing about, still at the giddy verge
 Their resolution fails ; their pinions still,
 In loose libration stretch'd, to trust the void
 Trembling refuse ; till down before them fly
 The parent guides, and chide, exhort, command,
 Or push them off. The surging air receives
 Its plummy burden ; and their self-taught wings
 Winnow the waving element. On ground
 Alighted, bolder up again they lead,
 Farther and farther on, the lengthening flight ;
 Till vanish'd every fear, and every power
 Roused into life and action, light in air
 The acquitted parents see their soaring race,
 And once rejoicing never know them more.

High from the summit of a craggy cliff,
 Hung o'er the deep, such as amazing frowns
 On utmost Kilda's* shore, whose lonely race
 Resign the setting sun to Indian worlds,
 The royal eagle draws his vigorous young,
 Strong-pounced, and ardent with paternal fire.
 Now fit to raise a kingdom of their own,
 He drives them from his fort, the towering seat,
 For ages, of his empire ; which in peace,
 Unstain'd, he holds, while many a league to sea
 He wings his course and preys in distant isles.

Should I my steps turn to the rural seat,
 Whose lofty elms, and venerable oaks,
 Invite the rook, who high amid the boughs,
 In early Spring, his airy city builds,
 And ceaseless caws amusive ; there, well-pleased,
 I might the various polity survey
 Of the mix'd household kind. The careful hen
 Calls all her chirping family around,
 Fed and defended by the fearless cock,
 Whose breast with arduous flames, as on he walks,
 Graceful, and crows defiance. In the pond
 The finely-checker'd duck before her train
 Rows garrulous. The stately-sailing swan
 Gives out his snowy plumage to the gale ;
 And, arching proud his neck, with oary feet
 Bears forward fierce, and guards his osier-isle,
 Protective of his young. The turkey nigh, [spreads
 Loud threatening, reddens ; while the peacock

His every-colour'd glory to the sun,
 And swims in radiant majesty along.
 O'er the whole homely scene, the cooing dove
 Flies thick in amorous chase, and wanton rolls
 The glancing eye, and turns the changeful neck.

While thus the gentle tenants of the shade
 Indulge their purer loves, the rougher world
 Of brutes, below, rush furious into flame,
 And fierce desire. Through all his lusty veins
 The bull, deep-scorch'd, the raging passion feels.
 Of pasture sick, and negligent of food,
 Scarce seen, he wades among the yellow broom,
 While o'er his ample sides the rambling sprays
 Luxuriant shoot ; or through the mazy wood
 Dejected wanders, nor the enticing bud
 Crops, though it presses on his careless sense.
 And oft, in jealous maddening fancy rapt,
 He seeks the fight and, idly butting, feigns
 His rival gored in every knotty trunk.
 Him should he meet, the bellowing war begins :
 Their eyes flash fury ; to the hollow'd earth,
 Whence the sand flies, they mutter bloody deeds,
 And, groaning deep, the impetuous bloody mix :
 While the fair heifer, balmy-breathing, near,
 Stands kindling up their rage. The trembling steed,
 With his hot impulse seized in every nerve,
 Nor heeds the rein, nor hears the sounding thong :
 Blows are not felt ; but tossing high his head,
 And by the well known joy to distant plains
 Attracted strong, all wild he bursts away ;
 O'er rocks, and woods, and craggy mountains flies,
 And, neighing, on the ærial summit takes
 The exciting gale ; then, steep-descending, cleaves
 The headlong torrents foaming down the hills,
 Even where the madness of the straiten'd stream
 Turns in black eddies round : such is the force
 With which his frantic heart and sinews swell.

Nor undelighted by the boundless Spring
 Are the broad monsters of the foaming deep :
 From the deep ooze and gelid cavern roused,
 They flounce and tumble in unwieldy joy.
 Dire were the strain, and dissonant, to sing
 The cruel raptures of the savage kind ;
 How, by this flame their native wrath sublimed,
 They roam, amid the fury of their heart,
 The far-resounding waste in fiercer bands,
 And growl their horrid loves. But this the theme
 I sing, enraptured, to the British Fair,
 Forbids, and leads me to the mountain brow,
 Where sits the shepherd on the grassy turf,
 Inhaling, healthful, the descending sun.
 Around him feeds his many-bleating flock,
 Of various cadence ; and his sportive lambs,
 This way and that convolved, in friskful glee,
 Their frolics play. And now the sprightly race
 Invites them forth ; when swift, the signal given,
 They start away, and sweep the massy mound
 That runs around the hill ; the rampart once
 Of iron war, in ancient barbarous times,
 When disunited Britain ever bled,
 Lost in eternal broil : ere yet she grew
 To this deep-laid indissoluble state,
 Where Wealth and Commerce lift their golden
 And o'er our labours Liberty and Law, [heads ;
 Impartial, watch ; the wonder of a world !

What is this mighty breath, ye sages, say,
 That, in a powerful language, felt, not heard,
 Instructs the fowls of heaven, and through their
 breast

These arts of love diffuses ? What, but God ?

* The farthest of the Western Islands of Scotland.

Inspiring God ! who boundless Spirit all,
 And unremitting Energy, pervades,
 Adjusts, sustains, and agitates the whole.
 He ceaseless works alone ; and yet alone
 Seems not to work : with such perfection framed
 Is this complex stupendous scheme of things.
 But, though conceal'd to every purer eye
 Th' informing Author in his works appears :
 Chief, lovely Spring, in thee, and thy soft scenes,
 The smiling God is seen ; while water, earth,
 And air, attest his bounty ; which exalts
 The brute creation to this finer thought,
 And, annual, melts their undesigning hearts
 Profusely thus in tenderness and joy.

Still let my song a nobler note assume,
 And sing the infusive force of Spring on man.
 When heaven and earth, as if contending, vie
 To raise his being, and serene his soul,
 Can he forbear to join the general smile
 Of nature ? Can fierce passions vex his breast,
 While every gale is peace, and every grove
 Is melody ? Hence ! from the bounteous walks
 Of flowing Spring, ye sordid sons of earth,
 Hard, and unfeeling of another's woe,
 Or only lavish to yourselves, away !
 But come, ye generous minds, in whose wide thought,
 Of all his works, creative Bounty burns
 With warmest beam ; and on your open front
 And liberal eye sits, from his dark retreat
 Inviting modest Want. Nor, till invoked,
 Can restless Goodness wait ; your active search
 Leaves no cold wintry corner unexplored ;
 Like silent-working Heaven, surprising oft
 The lonely heart with unexpected good.
 For you the roving spirit of the wind
 Blows Spring abroad ; for you the teeming clouds
 Descend in gladsome plenty o'er the world ;
 And the sun sheds his kindest rays for you,
 Ye flower of human race ! In these green days,
 Reviving Sickness lifts her languid head ;
 Life flows afresh ; and young-eyed Health exalts
 The whole creation round. Contentment walks
 The sunny glade, and feels an inward bliss
 Spring o'er his mind, beyond the power of kings
 To purchase. Pure serenity apace
 Induces thought, and contemplation still.
 By swift degrees the love of Nature works,
 And warms the bosom ; till at last sublimed
 To rapture, and enthusiastic heat,
 We feel the present Deity and taste
 The joy of God to see a happy world !

These are the sacred feelings of thy heart,
 Thy heart inform'd by reason's purer ray,
 O Lytelson, the friend ! thy passions thus
 And meditations vary, as at large, [stray'st ;
 Courting the Muse, through Hagley Park thou
 The British Tempe ! There along the dale,
 With woods o'erlung, and shagg'd with mossy rocks,
 Whence on each hand the gushing waters play,
 And down the rough cascade white-dashing fall,
 Or gleam in lengthen'd vista through the trees,
 You silent steal ; or sit beneath the shade
 Of solemn oaks, that tuft the swelling mounts
 Thrown graceful round by Nature's careless hand,
 And, pensive, listen to the various voice
 Of rural peace ; the herds, the flocks, the birds,
 The hollow-whispering breeze, the plaint of rills,
 That, purling down amid the twisted roots
 Which creep around, their dewy murmurs shake
 On the soothed ear. From these abstracted oft,

You wander through the philosophic world,
 Where in bright train continual wonders rise
 Or to the curious or the pious eye.
 And oft, conducted by historic truth,
 You tread the long extent of backward time ;
 Planning, with warm benevolence of mind,
 And honest zeal unwarped by party rage,
 Britannia's weal ; how from the venal gulf
 To raise her virtue, and her arts revive.
 Or, turning thence thy view, these graver thoughts
 The Muses charm : while, with sure taste refined,
 You draw th' inspiring breath of ancient song,
 Till nobly rises, emulous, thy own.
 Perhaps thy loved Lucinda shares thy walk,
 With soul to thine attuned. Then Nature all
 Wears to the lover's eye a look of love ;
 And all the tumult of a guilty world,
 Toss'd by ungenerous passions, sinks away.
 The tender heart is animated peace,
 And as it pours its copious treasures forth
 In varied converse, softening every theme,
 You, frequent-pausing, turn, and from her eyes,
 Where meekness dwells, and amiable grace,
 And lively sweetness dwell, enraptured, drink
 That nameless spirit of ethereal joy,
 Unutterable happiness ! which love
 Alone bestows, and on a favour'd few.
 Meantime you gain the height, from whose fair brow
 The bursting prospect spreads, immense, around :
 And snatch'd o'er hill and dale, and wood and lawn,
 And verdant field, and darkening heath between,
 And villages embosomed soft in trees,
 And spiry towns by surging columns mark'd
 Of household smoke, your eye excursive roams :
 Wide-stretching from the hall, in whose kind haunt
 The Hospitable Genius lingers still,
 To where the broken landscape, by degrees,
 Ascending, roughens into rigid hills ;
 O'er which the Cambrian mountains, like far clouds
 That skirt the blue horizon, dusky rise.

Flush'd by the spirit of the genial year,
 Now from the virgin's cheek a fresher bloom
 Shoots, less and less, the live carnation round ;
 Her lips blush deeper sweets : she breathes of
 youth ;
 The shining moisture swells into her eyes,
 In brighter flow ; her wishing bosom heaves
 With palpitations wild ; kind tumults seize
 Her veins, and all her yielding soul is love.
 From the keen gaze her lover turns away,
 Full of the dear ecstasie power, and sick
 With sighing languishment. Ah then, ye fair !
 Be greatly cautious of your sliding hearts :
 Dare not the infectious sigh : the pleading look,
 Downcast and low, in meek submission dress'd,
 But full of guile. Let not the fervent tongue,
 Prompt to deceive, with adulation smooth,
 Gain on your purposed will. Nor in the bower,
 Where woodbines flaunt, and roses shed a couch,
 While Evening draws her crimson curtains round,
 Trust your soft minutes with betraying man.

And let the aspiring youth beware of love,
 Of the smooth glance beware ; for 'tis too late
 When on his heart the torrent-softness pours.
 Then wisdom prostrate lies, and fading fame
 Dissolves in air away ; while the fond soul,
 Wrapp'd in gay visions of unreal bliss,
 Still paints the illusive form ; the kindling grace ;
 The enticing smile ; the modest-seeming eye,
 Beneath whose beauteous beams, belying heaven,

Lurk searchless cunning, cruelty, and death ;
And still, false-warbling in his cheated ear,
Her siren voice, enchanting, draws him on
To guileful shores, and meads of fatal joy.

Even present, in the very lap of love
Inglorious laid ; while music flows around,
Perfumes, and oils, and wine, and wanton hours ;
Amid the roses fierce Repentance rears
Her snaky crest : a quick-returning pang [still,
Shoots through the conscious heart ; where honour
And great design, against the oppressive load
Of luxury, by fits, impatient heave.

But absent, what fantastic woes, aroused,
Rage in each thought, by restless musing fed,
Chill the warm cheek, and blast the bloom of life !
Neglected fortune flies ; and, sliding swift,
Prone into ruin fall his scorn'd affairs.
'Tis nought but gloom around : the darken'd sun
Loses his light : the rosy-bosomed Spring
To weeping fancy pines ; and yon bright arch,
Contracted, bends into a dusky vault.

All Nature fades extinct ; and she alone,
Heard, felt, and seen, possesses every thought,
Fills every sense, and pants in every vein.
Books are but formal dulness, tedious friends ;
And sad amid the social band he sits,
Lonely, and unattentive. From his tongue
The unfinish'd period falls : while, borne away
On swelling thought, his wafted spirit flies
To the vain bosom of his distant fair ;
And leaves the semblance of a lover, fix'd
In melancholy site, with head declined,
And love-dejected eyes. Sudden he starts,
Shook from his tender trance, and restless runs
To glimmering shades, and sympathetic glooms ;
Where the dun umbrage o'er the falling stream,
Romantic, hangs ; there through the pensive dusk
Strays, in heart-thrilling meditation lost,
Indulging all to love : or on the bank
Thrown, amid drooping lilies, swells the breeze
With sighs unceasing, and the brook with tears.

Thus in soft anguish he consumes the day,
Nor quits his deep retirement, till the moon
Peeps through the chambers of the fleecy east
Enlighten'd by degrees, and in her train
Leads on the gentle Hours ; then forth he walks,
Beneath the trembling languish of her beam,
With soften'd soul, and woos the bird of eve
To mingle woes with his ; or, while the world
And all the sons of care lie hush'd in sleep,
Associates with the midnight shadows drear ;
And, sighing to the lonely taper, pours
His idly-tortured heart into the page
Meant for the moving messenger of love ;
Where rapture burns on rapture, every line
With rising frenzy fired. But, if on bed
Delirious flung, sleep from his pillow flies.
All night he tosses, nor the balmy power
In any posture finds ; till the grey morn
Lifts her pale lustre on the paler wretch,
Exanimate by love : and then perhaps
Exhausted nature sinks awhile to rest,
Still interrupted by distracted dreams,
That o'er the sick imagination rise,
And in black colours paint the mimic scene.

Oft with the enchantress of his soul he talks ;
Sometimes in crowds distress'd ; or if retired
To secret winding flower-enwoven bowers,
Far from the dull impertinence of man,
Just as he, credulous, his endless cares

Begins to lose in blind oblivious love,
Snatch'd from her yielded hand, he knows not how,
Through forest huge, and long untravel'd heaths
With desolation brown, he wanders waste,
In night and tempest wrapp'd ; or shrinks aghast,
Back, from the bending precipice ; or wades
The turbid stream below, and strives to reach
The farther shore ; where, succourless and sad,
She with extended arms his aid implores ;
But strives in vain : borne by the outrageous flood
To distance down, he rides the ridgy wave,
Or whelm'd beneath the boiling eddy sinks.

These are the charming agonies of love,
Whose misery delights. But through the heart
Should jealousy its venom once diffuse,
'Tis then delightful misery no more,
But agony unmix'd, incessant gall,
Corroding every thought, and blasting all
Love's paradise. Ye fairy prospects, then,
Ye beds of roses, and ye bowers of joy,
Farewell ! Ye gleamings of departed peace,
Shine out your last ! the yellow-tinging plague
Internal vision taints, and in a night
Of livid gloom imagination wraps.
Ah then ! instead of love-enliven'd cheeks,
Of sunny features, and of ardent eyes
With flowing rapture bright, dark looks succeed,
Suffused and glaring with untender fire ;
A clouded aspect, and a burning cheek,
Where the whole poison'd soul, malignant, sits,
And frightens love away. Ten thousand fears
Invented wild, ten thousand frantic views
Of horrid rivals, hanging on the charms
For which he melts in fondness, eat him up
With fervent anguish and consuming rage.
In vain reproaches lend their idle aid,
Deceitful pride, and resolution frail,
Giving false peace a moment. Fancy pours,
Afresh, her beauties on his busy thought,
Her first endearments twining round the soul,
With all the witchcraft of ensnaring love.
Straight the fierce storm involves his mind anew,
Flames through the nerves, and boils along the
veins ;

While anxious doubt distracts the tortured heart :
For even the sad assurance of his fears
Were ease to what he feels. Thus the warm youth,
Whom love deludes into his thorny wilds,
Through flowery-tempting paths, or leads a life
Of fever'd rapture, or of cruel care ;
His brightest aims extinguish'd all, and all
His lively moments running down to waste.

But happy they ! the happiest of their kind !
Whom gentler stars unite, and in one fate
Their hearts, their fortunes, and their beings blend.
'Tis not the coarser tie of human laws,
Unnatural oft, and foreign to the mind,
That binds their peace, but harmony itself,
Attuning all their passions into love ;
Where friendship full exerts her softest power,
Perfect esteem enliven'd by desire
Ineffable, and sympathy of soul ;
Thought meeting thought, and will preventing will,
With boundless confidence : for nought but love
Can answer love, and render bliss secure.
Let him, ungenerous, who, alone intent
To bless himself, from sordid parents buys
The loathing virgin, in eternal care,
Well-merited, consume his nights and days :
Let barbarous nations, whose inhuman love

Is wild desire, fierce as the suns they feel ;
Let eastern tyrants from the light of heaven
Seclude their bosom-slaves, meanly possess'd
Of a mere lifeless violated form :
While those whom love cements in holy faith,
And equal transport, free as nature live,
Disdaining fear. What is the world to them,
Its pomp, its pleasure, and its nonsense all,
Who in each other clasp whatever fair
High fancy forms, and lavish hearts can wish ;
Something than beauty dearer, should they look
Or on the mind, or mind-illuminated face :
Truth, goodness, honour, harmony, and love,
The richest bounty of indulgent heaven ?
Meantime a smiling offspring rises round,
And mingles both their graces. By degrees,
The human blossom blows : and every day,
Soft as it rolls along, shows some new charm,
The father's lustre, and the mother's bloom.
Then infant reason grows apace, and calls
For the kind hand of an assiduous care.
Delightful task ! to rear the tender thought,
To teach the young idea how to shoot,

To pour the fresh instruction o'er the mind,
To breathe the enlivening spirit, and to fix
The generous purpose in the glowing breast.
Oh, speak the joy ! ye, whom the sudden tear
Surprises often, while you look around,
And nothing strikes your eye but sights of bliss,
All various Nature pressing on the heart :
An elegant sufficiency, content,
Retirement, rural quiet, friendship, books,
Ease and alternate labour, useful life,
Progressive virtue, and approving Heaven.
These are the matchless joys of virtuous love ;
And thus their moments fly. The Seasons thus,
As ceaseless round a jarring world they roll,
Still find them happy ; and consenting Spring
Sheds her own rosy garland on their heads :
Till evening comes at last, serene and mild ;
When after the long vernal day of life,
Enamour'd more, as more remembrance swells
With many a proof of recollected love,
Together down they sink in social sleep ;
Together freed, their gentle spirits fly
To scenes where love and bliss immortal reign.

SUMMER.

Jam clarus occultum Andromedæ pater
Ostendit ignem : jam Procyon furit
Et stella vesani Leonis,
Sole dies referente siccos.
Jam pastor umbras cum grege languido,
Rivumque fessus quærit, et horridi
Dumeta Sylvani : caretque
Ripa vagis taciturna ventis.—HOR.

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE MR. DODINGTON,

ONE OF THE LORDS OF HIS MAJESTY'S TREASURY, ETC.

SIR,

It is not my purpose, in this address, to run into the common track of dedicators, and attempt a panegyric which would prove *ungrateful* to you, too *arduous* for me, and *superfluous* with regard to the world. To you it would prove *ungrateful*, since there is a certain generous delicacy in men of the most distinguished merit, disposing them to avoid those praises they so powerfully attract : and when I consider that a *character*, in which the VIRTUES, the GRACES, and the MUSES join their influence, as much exceeds the expression of the most elegant and judicious pen as the finished *beauty* does the representation of the pencil, I have the best reasons for declining such an *arduous* undertaking, as, indeed, it would be *superfluous* in itself; for what reader need to be told of those great abilities in the management of public affairs, and those amiable accomplishments in private life, which you so eminently possess? The general voice is loud in the praise of so many virtues, though posterity alone will do them justice; but may you, SIR, live long to illustrate your own fame by your own actions, and by them be transmitted to future times as the BRITISH MÆCENAS.

Your example has recommended POETRY, with the greatest grace, to the admiration of those who are engaged in the highest and most active scenes of life; and this, though confessedly the least considerable of those exalted qualities that dignify your character, must be particularly pleasing to *one* whose only hope of being introduced to your regard is through the recommendation of an ART in which you are a master.—But I forget what I have been declaring above, and must therefore turn my eyes to the following sheets. I am not ignorant that, when offered to your perusal, they are put into the hands of one of the finest, and consequently the most indulgent, judges of the age; but as there is no mediocrity in POETRY, so there should be no limits to its ambition.—I venture directly on the trial of my fame. If what I here present you has any merit to gain your approbation, I am not afraid of its success; and if it fails of your notice, I give it up to its just fate.—This advantage at least I secure to myself, an occasion of thus publicly declaring that I am, with the profoundest veneration, SIR,

Your most devoted, humble servant,

JAMES THOMSON.

ARGUMENT.

The subject proposed. Invocation. Address to Mr. Dodington. An introductory reflection on the motion of the heavenly bodies; whence the succession of the seasons. As the face of nature in this season is almost uniform, the progress of the poem is a description of a summer's day. The dawn. Sun-rising. Hymn to the sun. Forenoon. Summer insects described. Haymaking. Sheep-shearing. Noon-day. A woodland retreat. Group of herds and flocks. A solemn grove; how it affects a contemplative mind. A cataract, and rude scene. View of summer

in the torrid zone. Storm of thunder and lightning. A tale. The storm over, a serene afternoon. Bathing. Hour of walking. Transition to the prospect of a rich well-cultivated country; which introduces a panegyric on Great Britain. Sunset. Evening. Night. Summer meteors. A comet. The whole concluding with the praise of philosophy.

From brightening fields of ether fair disclosed,
Child of the Sun, refulgent Summer comes,
In pride of youth, and felt through Nature's depth:

He comes attended by the sultry Hours,
And ever-fanning breezes, on his way ;
While, from his ardent look, the turning Spring
Averts her blushful face ; and earth, and skies,
All-smiling, to his hot dominion leaves.

Hence, let me haste into the mid-wood shade,
Where scarce a sunbeam wanders through the
gloom ;

And on the dark-green grass, beside the brink
Of haunted stream, that by the roots of oak
Rolls o'er the rocky channel, lie at large,
And sing the glories of the circling year.

Come, Inspiration ! from thy hermit seat,
By mortal seldom found ; may Fancy dare,
From thy fix'd serious eye, and raptur'd glance
Shot on surrounding heaven, to steal one look
Creative of the Poet, every power
Exalting to an ecstasy of soul.

And thou, my youthful Muse's early friend,
In whom the human graces all unite :
Pure light of mind, and tenderness of heart ;
Genius, and wisdom : the gay social sense,
By decency chastised ; goodness and wit,
In seldom-meeting harmony combined ;
Unblemish'd honour, and an active zeal
For Britain's glory, liberty, and man :
O Dodington ! attend my rural song,
Stoop to my theme, inspirit every line,
And teach me to deserve thy just applause.

With what an awful world-revolving power
Were first the unwieldy planets launch'd along
The illimitable void ! thus to remain,
Amid the flux of many thousand years,
That oft has swept the toiling race of men
And all their labour'd monuments away,
Firm, unremitting, matchless, in their course ;
To the kind-temper'd change of night and day,
And of the seasons ever stealing round,
Minutely faithful : such the All-perfect hand
That poised, impels, and rules the steady whole !

When now no more the alternate Twins are fired,
And Cancer reddens with the solar blaze,
Short is the doubtful empire of the night ;
And soon, observant of approaching day,
The meek-eyed Morn appears, mother of dews,
At first faint-gleaming in the dappled east :
Till far o'er ether spreads the widening glow ;
And, from before the lustre of her face, [step,
White break the clouds away. With quicken'd
Brown Night retires : young Day pours in apace,
And opens all the lawnly prospect wide.
The dripping-rock, the mountain's misty top,
Swell on the sight, and brighten with the dawn.
Blue, through the dusk, the smoking currents shine ;
And from the bladed field the fearful hare
Limps, awkward ; while along the forest glade
The wild deer trip, and often turning gaze
At early passenger. Music awakes
The native voice of undissembled joy ;
And thick around the woodland hymns arise.
Roused by the cock, the soon-clad shepherd leaves
His mossy cottage, where with peace he dwells ;
And from the crowded fold, in order, drives
His flock, to taste the verdure of the morn.

Falsely luxurious ! will not man awake ;
And, springing from the bed of sloth, enjoy
The cool, the fragrant and the silent hour,
To meditation due and sacred song ?
For is there aught in sleep can charm the wise ?
To lie in dead oblivion, losing half

The fleeting moments of too short a life ;
Total extinction of the enlighten'd soul !
Or else to feverish vanity alive,
Wilderness'd, and tossing through distemper'd dreams ?
Who would in such a gloomy state remain
Longer than nature craves, when every Muse
And every blooming pleasure waits without,
To bless the wildly-devout morning-walk ?

But yonder comes the powerful King of Day,
Rejoicing in the east. The lessening cloud,
The kindling azure, and the mountain's brow
Illumed with fluid gold, his near approach
Betoken glad. Lo ! now, apparent all,
Aslant the dew-bright earth, and colour'd air,
He looks in boundless majesty abroad ;
And sheds the shining day, that burnish'd plays
On rocks, and hills, and towers, and wandering
streams,

High-gleaming from afar. Prime cheerer, Light !
Of all material beings first, and best !
Efflux divine ! Nature's resplendent robe !
Without whose vesting beauty all were wrapt
In unessential gloom ; and thou, O Sun !
Soul of surrounding worlds ! in whom best seen
Shines out thy Maker ! may I sing of thee ?

'Tis by thy secret, strong, attractive force,
As with a chain indissoluble bound,
Thy system rolls entire : from the far bourne
Of utmost Saturn, wheeling wide his round
Of thirty years, to Mercury, whose disk
Can scarce be caught by philosophic eye,
Lost in the near effulgence of thy blaze.

Informer of the planetary train !
Without whose quickening glance their cumbrous
Were brute unlovely mass, inert and dead, [orbs
And not, as now, the green abodes of life !
How many forms of being wait on thee,
Inhaling spirit ; from the unfetter'd mind,
By thee sublimed, down to the daily race,
The mixing myriads of thy setting beam !

The vegetable world is also thine,
Parent of Seasons ! who the pomp precede
That waits thy throne, as through thy vast domain,
Annual, along the bright ecliptic road,
In world-rejoicing state, it moves sublime.
Meantime the expecting nations, circled gay
With all the various tribes of foodful earth,
Implore thy bounty, or send grateful up
A common hymn : while, round thy beaming car,
High seen, the Seasons lead, in sprightly dance
Harmonious knit, the rosy-finger'd Hours,
The Zephyrs floating loose, the timely Rains,
Of bloom ethereal the light-footed Dews,
And soften'd into joy the surly Storms.
These, in successive turn, with lavish hand,
Shower every beauty, every fragrance shower,
Herbs, flowers, and fruits ; till kindling at thy touch,
From land to land is flush'd the vernal year.

Nor to the surface of enliven'd earth,
Graceful with hills and dales, and leafy woods,
Her liberal tresses, is thy force confined :
But, to the bowel'd cavern darting deep,
The mineral kinds confess thy mighty power.
Effulgent, hence the veiny marble shines ; [War
Hence Labour draws his tools ; hence burnish'd
Gleams on the day ; the nobler works of Peace
Hence bless mankind, and generous Commerce
The round of nations in a golden chain. [binds
The unfruitful rock itself, impregn'd by thee,
In dark retirement forms the lucid stone.

The lively diamond drinks thy purest rays,
 Collected light, compact ; that, polish'd bright,
 And all its native lustre let abroad,
 Dares, as it sparkles on the fair-one's breast,
 With vain ambition emulate her eyes.
 At thee, the ruby lights its deepening glow,
 And with a waving radiance inward flames.
 From thee the sapphire, solid ether, takes
 Its hue cerulean ; and, of evening tinct,
 The purple-streaming amethyst is thine.
 With thy own smile the yellow topaz burns.
 Nor deeper verdure dyes the robe of Spring,
 When first she gives it to the southern gale,
 Than the green emerald shows. But, all combined,
 Thick through the whitening opal play thy beams ;
 Or, flying several from its surface, form
 A trembling variance of revolving hues,
 As the site varies in the gazer's hand.

The very dead creation, from thy touch,
 Assumes a mimic life. By thee refined,
 In brighter mazes the relucient stream
 Plays o'er the mead. The precipice abrupt,
 Projecting horror on the blacken'd flood,
 Softens at thy return. The desert joys,
 Wildly, through all his melancholy bounds.
 Rude ruins glitter ; and the briny deep,
 Seen from some pointed promontory's top
 Far to the blue horizon's utmost verge,
 Restless, reflects a floating gleam. But this,
 And all the much-transported Muse can sing,
 Are to thy beauty, dignity, and use,
 Unequal far ; great delegated Source
 Of light, and life, and grace, and joy below !
 How shall I then attempt to sing of Him !
 Who, Light himself, in uncreated light
 Invested deep, dwells awfully retired
 From mortal eye or angel's purer ken,
 Whose single smile has, from the first of time,
 Fill'd, overflowing, all those lamps of Heaven,
 That beam for ever through the boundless sky :
 But, should he hide his face, the astonish'd sun,
 And all the extinguish'd stars, would loosening reel
 Wide from their spheres, and Chaos come again.

And yet was every faltering tongue of man,
 ALMIGHTY FATHER ! silent in thy praise,
 Thy works themselves would raise a general voice,
 Even in the depth of solitary woods
 By human foot untrod ; proclaim thy power,
 And to the choir celestial THEE resound,
 The eternal cause, support, and end of all !

To me be Nature's volume broad-display'd ;
 And to peruse its all-instructing page,
 Or, haply catching inspiration thence,
 Some easy passage, raptured, to translate,
 My sole delight ; as through the falling glooms
 Pensive I stray, or with the rising dawn
 On Fancy's eagle wing, excursive, soar.

Now, flaming up the heavens, the potent sun
 Melts into limpid air the high-raised clouds,
 And morning fogs, that hover'd round the hills
 In party-colour'd bands ; till wide unveil'd
 The face of Nature shines, from where earth seems,
 Far-stretch'd around, to meet the bending sphere.

Half in a blush of clustering roses lost,
 Dew-dropping Coolness to the shade retires ;
 There, on the verdant turf, or flowery bed,
 By gelid founts and careless rills to muse ;
 While tyrant Heat, disspreading through the sky,
 With rapid sway, his burning influence darts
 On man, and beast, and herb, and tepid stream.

Who can unpitying see the flowery race,
 Shed by the morn, their new-flush'd bloom resign,
 Before the parching beam ? so fade the fair,
 When fevers revel through their azure veins.
 But one, the lofty follower of the sun,
 Sad when he sets, shuts up her yellow leaves,
 Drooping all night ; and, when he warm returns,
 Points her enamour'd bosom to his ray.

Home, from his morning task, the swain retreats ;
 His flock before him stepping to the fold ;
 While the full udder'd mother lows around
 The cheerful cottage, then expecting food,
 The food of innocence and health ! The daw,
 The rook, and magpie, to the grey-grown oaks
 That the calm village in their verdant arms,
 Sheltering, embrace, direct their lazy flight ;
 Where on the mingling boughs they sit embower'd,
 All the hot noon, till cooler hours arise.
 Faint, underneath, the household fowls, convene ;
 And, in a corner of the buzzing shade,
 The house-dog, with the vacant grey-hound lies,
 Outstretch'd, and sleepy. In his slumbers one
 Attacks the nightly thief, and one exults
 O'er hill and dale ; till, waken'd by the wasp,
 They starting snap. Nor shall the Muse disdain
 To let the little noisy summer race
 Live in her lay, and flutter through her song :
 Not mean though simple ; to the sun allied,
 From him they draw their animating fire.

Waked by his warmer ray, the reptile young
 Come wing'd abroad ; by the light air upborne,
 Lighter, and full of soul. From every chink
 And secret corner, where they slept away
 The wintry storms ; or rising from their tombs,
 To higher life ; by myriads, forth at once,
 Swarming they pour ; of all the varied hues
 Their beauty-beaming parent can disclose.
 Ten thousand forms, ten thousand different tribes,
 People the blaze. To sunny waters some
 By fatal instinct fly ; where on the pool
 They, sportive, wheel ; or, sailing down the stream,
 Are snatch'd immediate by the quick-eyed trout,
 Or darting salmon. Through the greenwood glade
 Some love to stray ; there lodged, amused, and fed,
 In the fresh leaf. Luxurious, others make
 The meads their choice, and visit every flower,
 And every latent herb : for the sweet task,
 To propagate their kinds, and where to wrap,
 In what soft beds, their young yet undisclosed,
 Employs their tender care. Some to the house,
 The fold, and dairy, hungry, bend their flight ;
 Sip round the pail, or taste the curdling cheese ;
 Oft, inadvertent, from the milky stream
 They meet their fate ; or, weltering in the bowl,
 With powerless wings around them wrapt, expire.

But chief to heedless flies the window proves
 A constant death ; where, gloomily retired,
 The villain spider lives, cunning, and fierce,
 Mixture abhorr'd ! Amid a mangled heap
 Of carcases, in eager watch he sits
 O'erlooking all his waving snares around.
 Near the dire cell the dreadless wanderer oft
 Passes, as oft the ruffian shows his front ;
 The prey at last ensnared, he dreadful darts,
 With rapid glide, along the leaning line ;
 And, fixing in the wretch his cruel fangs,
 Strikes backward, grimly pleased : the fluttering
 And shriller sound declare extreme distress, [wing
 And ask the helping hospitable hand.

Resounds the living surface of the ground :

Nor undelightful is the ceaseless hum,
To him who muses through the woods at noon ;
Or drowsy shepherd, as he lies reclined,
With half-shut eyes, beneath the floating shade
Of willows grey, close-crowding o'er the brook.

Gradual, from these what numerous kinds
Evading even the microscopic eye ! [descend,
Full Nature swarms with life ; one wondrous mass
Of animals, or atoms organized,
Waiting the vital breath, when Parent-Heaven
Shall bid his spirit blow. The hoary fen,
In putrid steams, emits the living cloud
Of pestilence. Through subterranean cells,
Where searching sunbeams scarce can find a way,
Earth animated heaves. The flowery leaf
Wants not its soft inhabitants. Secure,
Within its winding citadel, the stone
Holds multitudes. But chief the forest-boughs,
That dance unnumber'd to the playful breeze,
The downy orchard, and the melting pulp
Of mellow fruit, the nameless nations feed
Of evanescent insects. Where the pool
Stands mantled o'er with green, invisible
Amid the floating verdure millions stray.
Each liquid too, whether it pierces, soothes,
Inflames, refreshes, or exalts the taste,
With various forms abounds. Nor is the stream
Of purest crystal, nor the lucid air,
Though one transparent vacancy it seems,
Void of their unseen people. These, conceal'd
By the kind art of forming Heaven, escape
The grosser eye of man ; for, if the worlds
In worlds enclosed should on his senses burst,
From cates ambrosial, and the nectar'd bowl,
He would abhorrent turn, and in dead night,
When silence sleeps o'er all, be stunn'd with noise.

Let no presuming impious railer tax
Creative Wisdom, as if aught was form'd
In vain, or not for admirable ends.
Shall little haughty Ignorance pronounce
His works unwise, of which the smallest part
Exceeds the narrow vision of her mind ?
As if upon a full proportion'd dome,
On swelling columns heaved the pride of art,
A critic-fly, whose feeble ray scarce spreads
An inch around, with blind presumption bold,
Should dare to tax the structure of the whole.
And lives the man, whose universal eye
Has swept at once the unbounded scheme of things,
Mark'd their dependence so, and firm accord,
As with unfaltering accent to conclude
That this availeth nought ? Has any seen
The mighty chain of beings, lessening down
From Infinite Perfection to the brink
Of dreary nothing, desolate abyss !
From which astonish'd thought recoiling turns ?
Till then alone let zealous praise ascend,
And hymns of holy wonder, to that Power
Whose wisdom shines as lovely on our minds,
As on our smiling eyes his servant sun.

Thick in yon stream of light, a thousand ways,
Upward, and downward, thwarting, and convolved,
The quivering nations sport ; till tempest-wing'd,
Pierce Winter sweeps them from the face of day.
Even so luxurious men, unheeding, pass
An idle summer life in fortune's shine,
A season's glitter ! Thus they flutter on
From toy to toy, from vanity to vice ;
Till, blown away by death, oblivion comes
Behind, and strikes them from the book of life.

Now swarms the village o'er the jovial mead ;
The rustic youth, brown with meridian toil,
Healthful and strong ; full as the summer rose
Blown by prevailing suns, the ruddy maid,
Half-naked, swelling on the sight, and all
Her kindled graces burning o'er her cheek.
Even stooping age is here ; and infant hands
Trail the long rake, or, with the fragrant load
O'ercharged, amid the kind oppression roll.
Wide flies the tedded grain ; all in a row
Advancing broad, or wheeling round the field,
They spread the breathing harvest to the sun,
That throws refreshful round a rural smell :
Or, as they rake the green-appearing ground,
And drive the dusky wave along the mead,
The russet hay-cock rises thick behind,
In order gay. While heard from dale to dale,
Waking the breeze, resounds the blended voice
Of happy labour, love, and social glee.

Or rushing thence, in one diffusive band,
They drive the troubled flocks, by many a dog
Compell'd, to where the mazy-running brook
Forms a deep pool ; this bank abrupt and high,
And that fair-spreading in a pebbled shore.
Urged to the giddy brink, much is the toil,
The clamour much, of men, and boys, and dogs,
Ere the soft fearful people to the flood
Commit their woolly sides. And oft the swain,
On some impatient seizing, hurls them in :
Embolden'd then, nor hesitating more,
Fast, fast, they plunge amid the flashing wave,
And, panting, labour to the farthest shore.
Repeated this, till deep the well-wash'd fleece
Has drunk the flood, and from his lively haunt
The trout is banish'd by the sordid stream ;
Heavy, and dripping, to the breezy brow
Slow move the harmless race : where, as they
spread

Their swelling treasures to the sunny ray,
Inly disturb'd, and wondering what this wild
Outrageous tumult means, their loud complaints
The country fill ; and, toss'd from rock to rock
Incessant bleedings run around the hills.
At last, of snowy white, the gather'd flocks
Are in the wattled pen, innumerable, press'd,
Head above head : and ranged in lusty rows
The shepherds sit, and wet the sounding shears.
The housewife waits to roll her fleecy stores,
With all her gay-dress'd maids attending round.
One, chief, in gracious dignity enthroned,
Shines o'er the rest, the pastoral queen, and rays
Her smiles, sweet-beaming, on her shepherd king ;
While the glad circle round them yield their souls
To festive mirth, and wit that knows no gall.
Meantime, their joyous task goes on apace :
Some mingling stir the melted tar, and some,
Deep on the new-shorn vagrant's heaving side,
To stamp the master's cypher ready stand ;
Others the unwilling wether drag along ;
And, glorying in his night, the sturdy boy
Holds by the twisted horns the indignant ram.
Behold where bound, and of its robe bereft,
By needy man, that all-depending lord,
How meek, how patient, the mild creature lies !
What softness in its melancholy face,
What dumb complaining innocence appears !
Fear not, ye gentle tribes, 'tis not the knife
Of horrid slaughter that is o'er you waved ;
No, 'tis the tender swain's well guided shears,
Who having now, to pay his annual care,

Borrow'd your fleece, to you a cumbrous load,
Will send you bounding to your hills again.

A simple scene ! yet hence Britannia sees
Her solid grandeur rise : hence she commands
The exalted stores of every brighter clime,
The treasures of the Sun without his rage :
Hence, fervent all, with culture, toil, and arts,
Wide glows her land : her dreadful thunder hence
Rides o'er the waves sublime, and now, even now,
Impending hangs o'er Gallia's humbled coast ;
Hence rules the circling deep, and awes the world.

'Tis raging noon ; and, vertical, the sun
Darts on the head direct his forceful rays.
O'er heaven and earth, far as the ranging eye
Can sweep, a dazzling deluge reigns ; and all
From pole to pole is undistinguish'd blaze.
In vain the sight, dejected, to the ground
Stoops for relief ; thence hot ascending steams
And keen reflection pain. Deep to the root
Of vegetation parch'd, the cleaving fields
And slippery lawn an arid hue disclose,
Blast Fancy's bloom, and wither e'en the soul.
Echo no more returns the cheerful sound
Of sharpening scythe : the mower, sinking, heaps
O'er him the humid hay, with flowers perfumed ;
And scarce a chirping grasshopper is heard
Through the dumb mead. Distressful Nature pants.
The very streams look languid from afar ;
Or, through the unshelter'd glade, impatient, seem
To hurl into the covert of the grove.

All-conquering Heat, oh, intermit thy wrath !
And on my throbbing temples potent thus
Beam not so fierce ! incessant still you flow,
And still another fervent flood succeeds,
Pour'd on the head profuse. In vain I sigh,
And restless turn, and look around for night ;
Night is far off ; and hotter hours approach.
Thrice happy he ! who on the sunless side
Of a romantic mountain, forest-crown'd,
Beneath the whole collected shade reclines :
Or in the gelid caverns, woodbine-wrought,
And fresh-bedew'd with ever-spouting streams,
Sits coolly calm ; while all the world without,
Unsatisfied, and sick, tosses in noon.
Emblem instructive of the virtuous man,
Who keeps his temper'd mind serene and pure,
And every passion aptly harmonized,
Amid a jarring world with vice inflamed.

Welcome, ye shades ! ye bowery thickets hail !
Ye lofty pines ! ye venerable oaks !
Ye ashes wild, resounding o'er the steep !
Delicious is your shelter to the soul,
As to the hunted hart the sallying spring,
Or stream full-flowing, that his swelling sides
Laves, as he floats along the herbage brink.
Cool, through the nerves, your pleasing comfort
glides ;

The heart beats glad ; the fresh-expanded eye
And ear resume their watch ; the sinews knit ;
And life shoots swift through all the lighten'd limbs.

Around the adjoining brook, that purls along
The vocal grove, now fretting o'er a rock,
Now scarcely moving through a reedy pool,
Now starting to a sudden stream, and now
Gently diffused into a limpid plain ;
A various group the herds and flocks compose,
Rural confusion ! On the grassy bank
Some ruminating lie ; while others stand
Half in the flood, and often bending sip
The circling surface. In the middle droops

The strong laborious ox, of honest front,
Which incomposed he shakes ; and from his sides
The troublous insects lashes with his tail,
Returning still. Amid his subjects safe,
Slumbers the monarch-swain ; his careless arm
Thrown round his head, on downy moss sustain'd ;
Here laid his scrip, with wholesome viands fill'd ;
There, listening every noise, his watchful dog.
Light fly his slumbers, if perchance a flight
Of angry gad-flies fasten on the herd,
That startling scatters from the shallow brook,
In search of lavish stream. Tossing the foam,
They scorn the keeper's voice, and scour the plain,
Through all the bright severity of noon ;
While from their labouring breasts a hollow moan
Proceeding, runs low-bellowing round the hills.

Off in this season too the horse, provoked,
While his big sinews full of spirits swell,
Trembling with vigour, in the heat of blood,
Springs the high fence ; and, o'er the field effused,
Darts on the gloomy flood, with steadfast eye,
And heart estranged to fear : his nervous chest,
Luxuriant, and erect, the seat of strength,
Bears down the opposing stream ; quenchless his
thirst :

He takes the river at redoubled draughts,
And with wide nostrils, snorting, skims the wave.

Still let me pierce into the midnight depth
Of yonder grove, of wildest largest growth ;
That, forming high in air a woodland choir,
Nods o'er the mount beneath. At every step,
Solemn and slow, the shadows blacker fall,
And all is awful listening gloom around.

These are the haunts of Meditation, these
The scenes where ancient bards the inspiring breath,
Ecstatic, felt ; and, from this world retired,
Conversed with angels, and immortal forms,
On gracious errands bent ; to save the fall
Of virtue struggling on the brink of vice ;
In waking whispers, and repeated dreams,
To hint pure thought, and warn the favour'd soul
For future trials fated to prepare ;
To prompt the poet, who devoted gives
His muse to better themes ; to soothe the pangs
Of dying worth, and from the patriot's breast
(Backward to mingle in detested war,
But foremost when engaged) to turn the death ;
And numberless such offices of love,
Daily, and nightly, zealous to perform.

Shook sudden from the bosom of the sky,
A thousand shapes or glide athwart the dusk,
Or stalk majestic on. Deep-roused, I feel
A sacred terror, a severe delight,
Creep through my mortal frame ; and thus, methinks,
A voice, than human more, the abstracted ear
Of Fancy strikes. " Be not of us afraid,
Poor kindred man ! thy fellow-creatures, we
From the same Parent-Power our beings drew,
The same our Lord, and laws, and great pursuit.
Once some of us, like thee, through stormy life,
Toil'd, tempest-beaten, ere we could attain
This holy calm, this harmony of mind,
Where purity and peace immingle charms.
Then fear not us ; but with responsive song,
Amid these dim recesses, undisturb'd
By noisy folly and discordant vice,
Of Nature sing with us, and Nature's God.
Here frequent, at the visionary hour,
When musing midnight reigns or silent noon,
Angelic harps are in full concert heard,

And voices chanting from the wood-crown'd hill,
The deepening dale, or inmost sylvan glade :
A privilege bestow'd by us, alone,
On Contemplation, or the hollow'd ear
Of poet, swelling to seraphic strain."

And art thou, Stanley *, of that sacred band ?
Alas, for us too soon ! though raised above
The reach of human pain, above the flight
Of human joy ; yet, with a mingled ray
Of sadly pleased remembrance, must thou feel
A mother's love, a mother's tender woe,
Who seeks thee still, in many a former scene ;
Seeks thy fair form, thy lovely beaming eyes,
Thy pleasing converse, by gay lively sense
Inspired, where moral wisdom mildly shone
Without the toil of art ; and virtue glow'd,
In all her smiles, without forbidding pride.
But, O thou best of parents ! wipe thy tears ;
Or rather to Parental Nature pay
The tears of grateful joy, who for a while
Lent thee this younger self, this opening bloom
Of thy enlighten'd mind and gentle worth.
Believe the Muse : the wintry blast of death
Kills not the buds of virtue ; no, they spread,
Beneath the heavenly beam of brighter suns,
Through endless ages, into higher powers.

Thus up the mount, in airy vision rapt,
I stray, regardless whither, till the sound
Of a near fall of water every sense [back,
Wakes from the charm of thought : swift-shrinking
I check my steps, and view the broken scene.

Smooth to the shelving brink a copious flood
Rolls fair and placid, where collected all,
In one impetuous torrent, down the steep
It thundering shoots, and shakes the country round.
At first, an azure sheet, it rushes broad ;
Then whitening by degrees, as prone it falls,
And, from the loud-resounding rocks below,
Dash'd in a cloud of foam, it sends aloft
A hoary mist, and forms a ceaseless shower.
Nor can the tortured wave here find repose ;
But, raging still amid the shaggy rocks,
Now flashes o'er the scatter'd fragments, now
Aslant the hollow'd channel rapid darts ;
And falling fast from gradual slope to slope,
With wild infracted course and lessen'd roar,
It gains a safer bed, and steals, at last,
Along the mazes of the quiet vale.

Invited from the cliff, to whose dark brow
He clings, the steep-ascending eagle soars,
With upward pinions through the flood of day ;
And, giving full his bosom to the blaze,
Gains on the sun ; while all the tuneful race
Smit by afflictive noon, disorder'd droop,
Deep in the thicket ; or from bower to bower,
Responsive, force an interrupted strain.
The stock-dove only through the forest coos,
Mournfully hoarse ; oft ceasing from his plaint,
Short interval of weary woe ! again
The sad idea of his murder'd mate,
Struck from his side by savage fowler's guile,
Across his fancy comes ; and then resounds
A louder song of sorrow through the grove.

Beside the dewy border let me sit,
All in the freshness of the humid air ;
There in that hollow'd rock, grotesque and wild,
An ample chair moss-lined, and over head -

* A young lady, well known to the author, who died at the age of eighteen, in the year 1738.

By flowering umbrage shaded ; where the bee
Strays diligent, and with the extracted balm
Of fragrant woodbine loads his little thigh.

Now, while I taste the sweetness of the shade,
While Nature lies around deep-lull'd in noon,
Now come, bold Fancy, spread a daring flight,
And view the wonders of the torrid zone :
Climes unrelenting ! with whose rage compared
Yon blaze is feeble, and yon skies are cool.

See, how at once the bright-effulgent sun,
Rising direct, swift chases from the sky
The short-lived twilight, and with ardent blaze
Looks gaily fierce through all the dazzling air :
He mounts his throne ; but kind before him sends,
Issuing from out the portals of the morn,
The general breeze †, to mitigate his fire
And breathe refreshment on a fainting world.
Great are the scenes, with dreadful beauty crown'd
And barbarous wealth, that see, each circling year,
Returning suns and double seasons pass ‡ ;
Rocks rich in gems, and mountains big with mines,
That on the high equator ridgy rise,
Whence many a bursting stream auriferous plays :
Majestic woods, of every vigorous green,
Stage above stage, high-waving o'er the hills ;
Or to the far horizon wide diffused,
A boundless deep immensity of shade.
Here lofty trees, to ancient song unknown,
The noble sons of potent heat and floods
Prone-rushing from the clouds, rear high to heaven
Their thorny stems, and broad around them throw
Meridian gloom. Here, in eternal prime,
Unnumber'd fruits, of keen delicious taste
And vital spirit, drink amid the cliffs,
And burning sands that bank the shrubby vales,
Redoubled day, yet in their rugged coats
A friendly juice to cool its rage contain.

Bear me, Pomona, to thy citron groves,
To where the lemon and the piercing lime,
With the deep orange, glowing through the green,
Their lighter glories blend. Lay me reclined
Beneath thy spreading tamarind, that shakes,
Fann'd by the breeze, its fever-cooling fruit.
Deep in the night the massy locust sheds,
Quench my hot limbs ; or lead me through the
Embowering endless, of the Indian fig ; [maze,
Or, thrown at gayer ease on some fair brow,
Let me behold, by breezy murmurs cool'd,
Broad o'er my head the verdant cedar wave,
And high palmets lift their graceful shade.
Or, stretch'd amid these orchards of the sun,
Give me to drain the cocoa's milky bowl,
And from the palm to draw its freshening wine,
More bounteous far than all the frantie juice
Which Bacchus pours ! Nor, on its slender twigs
Low-bending, be the full pomegranate scorn'd :
Nor, creeping through the woods, the gelid race
Of berries. Oft in humble station dwells
Unboastful worth, above fastidious pomp.
Witness, thou best anana, thou the pride
Of vegetable life, beyond whate'er
The poets imaged in the golden age :

† Which blows constantly between the tropics from the east, or the collateral points, the north-east and south-east ; caused by the pressure of the rarefied air on that before it, according to the diurnal motion of the sun from east to west.

‡ In all climates between the tropics, the sun, as he passes and repasses in his annual motion, is twice a year vertical, which produces this effect.

Quick let me strip thee of thy tufty coat,
Spread thy ambrosial stores, and feast with Jove !

From these the prospect varies. Plains immense
Lie stretch'd below, interminable meads,
And vast savannahs, where the wandering eye,
Unfix'd, is in a verdant ocean lost.

Another Flora there, of bolder hues,
And richer sweets, beyond our garden's pride,
Plays o'er the fields, and showers with sudden hand
Exuberant Spring ; for oft these valleys shift
Their green-embroider'd robe to fiery brown,
And swift to green again, as scorching suns,
Or streaming dews and torrent rains, prevail.

Along these lonely regions, where, retired
From little scenes of art, great Nature dwells
In awful solitude, and nought is seen
But the wild herds that own no master's stall,
Prodigious rivers roll their fattening seas,
On whose luxuriant herbage, half-conceal'd,
Like a fallen cedar, far-diffused his train,
Cased in green scales, the crocodile extends.
The flood disperss : behold ! in plaited mail,
Behemoth rears his head. Glanced from his side,
The darted steel in idle shivers flies ;
He fearless walks the plain, or seeks the hills,
Where, as he crops his varied fare, the herds,
In widening circle round, forget their food,
And at the harmless stranger wondering gaze.

Peaceful, beneath primeval trees, that cast
Their ample shade o'er Niger's yellow stream,
And where the Ganges rolls his sacred wave ;
Or 'mid the central depth of blackening woods,
High-raised in solemn theatre around,
Leans the huge elephant : wisest of brutes !
O truly wise, with gentle might endow'd,
Though powerful, not destructive ! Here he sees
Revolving ages sweep the changeful earth,
And empires rise and fall ; regardless he
Of what the never-resting race of men
Project : thrice-happy ! could he 'scape their guile,
Who mine, from cruel avarice, his steps ;
Or with his towery grandeur swell their state,
The pride of kings ! or else his strength pervert,
And bid him rage amid the mortal fray,
Astonish'd at the madness of mankind.

Wide o'er the winding umbrage of the floods,
Like vivid blossoms glowing from afar,
Thickswarm the brighter birds ; for Nature's hand,
That with a sportive vanity has deck'd
The plummy nations, there her gayest hues
Profusely pours. But, if she bids them shine,
Array'd in all the beauteous beams of day,
Yet, frugal still, she humbles them in song.*
Nor envy we the gaudy robes they lent
Proud Montezuma's realm, whose legions cast
A boundless radiance waving on the sun,
While Philomel is ours ; while in our shades,
Through the soft silence of the listening night,
The sober-suited songstress trills her lay.

But come, my Muse, the desert-barrier burst,
A wild expanse of lifeless sand and sky,
And, swifter than the toiling caravan,
Shoot o'er the vale of Sennar, ardent climb
The Nubian mountains, and the secret bounds
Of jealous Abyssinia boldly pierce.
Thou art no ruffian, who beneath the mask
Of social commerce comest to rob their wealth ;

*In all the regions of the torrid zone, the birds, though
more beautiful in their plumage, are observed to be less
melodious than ours.

No holy fury thou, blaspheming Heaven,
With consecrated steel to stab their peace,
And through the land, yet red from civil wounds,
To spread the purple tyranny of Rome.

Thou, like the harmless bee, mayst freely range
From mead to mead bright with exalted flowers,
From jasmine grove to grove mayst wander gay,
Through palmy shades and aromatic woods,
That grace the plains, invest the peopled hills,
And up the more than Alpine mountains wave.
There on the breezy summit, spreading fair
For many a league ; or on stupendous rocks,
That from the sun-redoubling valley lift,
Cool to the middle air, their lawny tops ;
Where palaces, and fanes, and villas rise ;
And gardens smile around, and cultured fields ;
And fountains gush ; and careless herds and flocks
Securely stray ; a world within itself,
Disdaining all assault : there let me draw
Ethereal soul, there drink reviving gales,
Profusely breathing from the spicy groves,
And vales of fragrance ; there at distance hear
The roaring floods and cataracts, that sweep
From disembowel'd earth the virgin gold ;
And o'er the varied landscape, restless, rove,
Fervent with life of every fairer kind :
A land of wonders ! which the sun still eyes
With ray direct, as of the lovely realm

Enamour'd, and delighting there to dwell. [noon,
How changed the scene ! In blazing height of
The sun, oppress'd, is plunged in thickest gloom.

Still horror reigns, a dreary twilight round
Of struggling night and day malignant mix'd.
For to the hot equator crowding fast,
Where, highly rarefied, the yielding air
Admits their stream, incessant vapours roll,
Amazing clouds on clouds continual heap'd ;
Or whirl'd tempestuous by the gusty wind,
Or silent borne along, heavy, and slow,
With the big stores of steaming oceans charged.
Meantime, amid these upper seas, condensed
Around the cold aerial mountain's brow,
And by conflicting winds together dash'd,
The thunder holds his black tremendous throne :
From cloud to cloud the rending lightnings rage ;
Till, in the furious elemental war
Dissolved, the whole precipitated mass
Unbroken floods and solid torrents pours.

The treasures these, hid from the bounded search
Of ancient knowledge, whence, with annual pomp,
Rich king of floods ! o'erflows the swelling Nile.
From his two springs, in Gojam's sunny realm,
Pure-welling out, he through the lucid lake
Of fair Dambea rolls his infant stream.
There, by the Naiads nursed, he sports away
His playful youth, amid the fragrant isles,
That with unfading verdure smile around.
Ambitious, thence the manly river breaks ;
And gathering many a flood, and copious fed
With all the mellow'd treasures of the sky,
Winds in progressive majesty along :
Through splendid kingdoms now devolves his maze,
Now wanders wild o'er solitary tracts
Of life-deserted sand ; till, glad to quit
The joyless desert, down the Nubian rocks,
From thundering steep to steep, he pours his urn,
And Egypt joys beneath the spreading wave.

His brother Niger too, and all the floods
In which the full-form'd maids of Afric lave
Their jetty limbs ; and all that from the tract

Of woody mountains stretch'd thro' gorgeous Ind
Fall on Cor'mandel's coast, or Malabar ;
From Menam's* orient stream, that nightly shines
With insect lamps, to where Aurora sheds
On Indus' smiling banks the rosy shower :
All, at this bounteous season, ope their urns,
And pour untailing harvest o'er the land.

Nor less thy world, Columbus, drinks, refresh'd,
The lavish moisture of the melting year.
Wide o'er his isles the branching Oronoque
Rolls a brown deluge, and the native drives
To dwell aloft on life-sufficing trees,
At once his dome, his robe, his food, and arms.
Swell'd by a thousand streams, impetuous hurl'd
From all the roaring Andes, huge descends
The mighty Orellana. Scarce the Muse
Dares stretch her wing o'er this enormous mass
Of rushing water ; scarce she dares attempt
The sea-like Plata, to whose dread expanse,
Continuous depth, and wondrous length of course,
Our floods are rills. With unabated force,
In silent dignity they sweep along,
And traverse realms unknown, and blooming wilds,
And fruitful deserts, worlds of solitude,
Where the sun smiles, and seasons teem in vain,
Unseen, and unenjoy'd. Forsaking these,
O'er peopled plains they fair-diffusive flow,
And many a nation feed, and circle safe,
In their soft bosom, many a happy isle ;
The seat of blameless Pan, yet undisturb'd
By Christian crimes and Europe's cruel sons.
Thus pouring on they proudly seek the deep,
Whose vanquish'd tide, recoiling from the shock,
Yields to this liquid weight of half the globe,
And Ocean trembles for his green domain.

But what avails this wondrous waste of wealth ?
This gay profusion of luxurious bliss ?
This pomp of Nature ? what their balmy meads,
Their powerful herbs, and Ceres void of pain ?
By vagrant birds dispersed, and wafting winds,
What their unplanted fruits ? what the cool
draughts,
The ambrosial food, rich gums, and spicy health,
Their forests yield ? their toiling insects what ?
Their silky pride, and vegetable robes ?
Ah ! what avail their fatal treasures, hid
Deep in the bowels of the pitying earth,
Golconda's gems, and sad Potosi's mines,
Where dwelt the gentlest children of the sun ?
What all that Afric's golden rivers roll,
Her odorous woods, and slining ivory stores ?
Ill-fated race ! the softening arts of peace,
Whate'er the humanising Muses teach ;
The godlike wisdom of the temper'd breast ;
Progressive truth, the patient force of thought ;
Investigation calm, whose silent powers
Command the world ; the light that leads to Heaven ;
Kind equal rule, the government of laws,
And all-protecting freedom, which alone
Sustains the name and dignity of man :
These are not theirs. The parent sun himself
Seems o'er this world of slaves to tyrannise ;
And, with oppressive ray the roseate bloom
Of beauty blasting, gives the gloomy hue,
And feature gross : or worse, to ruthless deeds,
Mad jealousy, blind rage, and fell revenge,
Their fervid spirit fires. Love dwells not there,

* The river that runs through Siam, on whose banks a vast multitude of those insects called fire-flies make a beautiful appearance at night.

The soft regards, the tenderness of life,
The heart-shed tear, the ineffable delight
Of sweet humanity : these court the beam
Of milder climes ; in selfish fierce desire,
And the wild fury of voluptuous sense,
There lost. The very brute-creation there
This rage partakes, and burns with horrid fire.

Lo ! the green serpent, from his dark abode,
Which e'en imagination fears to tread,
At noon forth-issuing, gathers up his train
In orbs immense, then, darting out anew,
Seeks the refreshing fount, by which, diffused,
He throws his folds : and while, with threatening
And deathful jaws erect, the monster curls [tongue
His flaming crest, all other thirst appall'd,
Or shivering flies, or check'd at distance stands,
Nor dares approach. But still more direful lie,
The small close-lurking minister of fate,
Whose high-concocted venom through the veins
A rapid lightning darts, arresting swift
The vital current. Form'd to humble man,
This child of vengeful Nature ! there, sublimed
To fearless lust of blood, the savage race
Roam, licensed by the shading hour of guilt,
And foul misdeed, when the pure day has shut
His sacred eye. The tiger darting fierce
Impetuous on the prey his glance has doom'd ;
The lively-shining leopard, speckled o'er
With many a spot, the beauty of the waste ;
And, scorning all the taming arts of man,
The keen hyena, fellest of the fell ;
These rushing from the inhospitable woods
Of Mauritania, or the tufted isles
That verdant rise amid the Libyan wild,
Innumerable glare around their shaggy king,
Majestic, stalking o'er the printed sand ;
And with imperious and repeated roars,
Demand their fated food. The fearful flocks
Crowd near the guardian swain ; the nobler herds,
Where round their lordly bull, in rural ease,
They ruminating lie, with horror hear
The coming rage. The awaken'd village starts ;
And to her fluttering breast the mother strains
Her thoughtless infant. From the pirate's den,
Or stern Morocco's tyrant fang, escaped,
The wretch half wishes for his bonds again ;
While, uproar all, the wilderness resounds,
From Atlas eastward to the frighted Nile.

Unhappy he, who from the first of joys,
Society, cut off, is left alone
Amid this world of death. Day after day,
Sad on the jutting eminence he sits,
And views the main that ever toils below ;
Still fondly forming in the farthest verge,
Where the round ether mixes with the wave,
Ships, dim-discover'd, dropping from the clouds ;
At evening to the setting sun he turns
A mournful eye, and down his dying heart
Sinks helpless ; while the wonted roar is up,
And hiss continual through the tedious night.
Yet here, even here, into these black abodes
Of monsters, unappall'd, from stooping Rome,
And guilty Cæsar, Liberty retired,
Her Cato following through Numidian wilds :
Disdainful of Campania's gentle plains,
And all the green delights Ausonia pours,
When for them she must bend the servile knee,
And fawning take the splendid robber's boon.

Nor stop the terrors of these regions here.
Commission'd demons oft, angels of wrath,

Let loose the raging elements. Breathed hot
From all the boundless furnace of the sky,
And the wide glittering waste of burning sand,
A suffocating wind the pilgrim smites
With instant death. Patient of thirst and toil,
Son of the desert ! even the camel feels,
Shot through his wither'd heart, the fiery blast.
Or from the black-red ether, bursting broad,
Sallies the sudden whirlwind. Straight the sands,
Commoved around, in gathering eddies play ;
Nearer and nearer still they darkening come :
Till, with the general all-involving storm
Swept up, the whole continuous wilds arise ;
And by their noon-day fount dejected thrown,
Or sunk at night in sad disastrous sleep,
Beneath descending hills the caravan
Is buried deep. In Cairo's crowded streets
The impatient merchant, wondering, waits in vain,
And Mecca saddens at the long delay.

But chief at sea, whose every flexile wave
Obeys the blast, the aerial tumult swells.
In the dread ocean, undulating wide,
Beneath the radiant line that girts the globe,
The circling Typhon, whirl'd from point to point,
Exhausting all the rage of all the sky,
And dire Ecnephia*, reign. Amid the heavens,
Falsely serene, deep in a cloudy speck†
Compress'd, the mighty tempest brooding dwells ;
Of no regard save to the skilful eye,
Fiery and foul, the small prognostic hangs
Aloft, or on the promontory's brow
Musters its force. A faint deceitful calm,
A fluttering gale, the demon sends before,
To tempt the spreading sail. Then down at once,
Precipitant, descends a mingled mass
Of roaring winds, and flame, and rushing floods.
In wild amazement fix'd the sailor stands.
Art is too slow : by rapid fate oppress'd,
His broad-wing'd vessel drinks the whelming tide,
Hid in the bosom of the black abyss.
With such mad seas the daring Gama‡ fought,
For many a day, and many a dreadful night,
Incessant, labouring round the stormy Cape ;
By bold ambition led, and bolder thirst
Of gold. For then from ancient gloom emerged
The rising world of trade : the Genius, then,
Of navigation, that, in hopeless sloth,
Had slumber'd on the vast Atlantic deep,
For idle ages, starting, heard at last
The Lusitanian prince§ ; who, Heaven-inspired,
To love of useful glory roused mankind,
And in unbounded commerce mix'd the world.

Increasing still the terrors of these storms,
His jaws horrific arm'd with threefold fate,
Here dwells the direful shark. Lured by the scent
Of steaming crowds, of rank disease, and death,
Behold ! he rushing cuts the briny flood,
Swift as the gale can bear the ship along ;
And, from the partners of that cruel trade
Which spoils unhappy Guinea of her sons,

* Typhon and Ecnephia, names of particular storms or hurricanes, known only between the tropics.

† Called by sailors the Ox-eye, being in appearance at first no bigger.

‡ Vasco de Gama, the first who sailed round Africa, by the Cape of Good Hope, to the East Indies.

§ Don Henry, third son to John the First, King of Portugal. His strong genius to the discovery of new countries was the chief source of all the modern improvements in navigation.

Demands his share of prey, demands themselves.
The stormy fates descend : one death involves
Tyrants and slaves ; when straight, their mangled
limbs

Crashing at once, he dyes the purple seas
With gore, and riots in the vengeful meal.

When o'er this world, by equinoctial rains
Flooded immense, looks out the joyless sun,
And draws the copious steam, from swampy fens,
Where putrefaction into life ferments,
And breathes destructive myriads ! or from woods,
Impenetrable shades, recesses foul,
In vapours rank and blue corruption wrapt,
Whose gloomy horrors yet no desperate foot
Has ever dared to pierce ; then, wasteful, forth
Walks the dire power of pestilent disease.
A thousand hideous fiends her course attend,
Sick Nature blasting, and to heartless woe,
And feeble desolation, casting down
The towering hopes and all the pride of man.
Such as, of late, at Carthagea venen'd
The British fire. You, gallant Vernon, saw,
The miserable scene ; you, pitying, saw
To infant weakness sunk the warrior's arm ;
Saw the deep-racking pang, the ghastly form,
The lip pale-quivering, and the beamless eye
No more with ardour bright : you heard the groans
Of agonising ships, from shore to shore ;
Heard nightly plunged amid the sullen waves
The frequent corse ; while on each other fix'd,
In sad presage, the blank assistants seem'd,
Silent, to ask, whom Fate would next demand.

What need I mention those inclement skies,
Where, frequent o'er the sickening city, Plague,
The fiercest child of Nemesis divine,
Descends ? From Ethiopia's poison'd woods,
From stifled Cairo's filth, and fetid fields
With locust-armies putrifying heap'd ||,
This great destroyer sprung. Her awful rage
The brutes escape ; man is her destined prey,
Intemperate man ! and o'er his guilty domes
She draws a close incumbent cloud of death ;
Uninterrupted by the living winds,
Forbid to blow a wholesome breeze ; and stain'd
With many a mixture by the sun, suffused,
Of angry aspect. Princely wisdom, then,
Dejects his watchful eye ; and from the hand
Of feeble justice, ineffectual, drop
The sword and balance : mute the voice of joy,
And hush'd the clamour of the busy world.
Empty the streets, with uncouth verdure clad ;
Into the worst of deserts sudden turn'd
The cheerful haunt of men : unless escaped [reigns,
From the doom'd house, where matchless horror
Shut up by barbarous fear, the smitten wretch,
With frenzy wild, breaks loose ; and loud to Heaven
Screaming, the dreadful policy arraigns,
Inhuman, and unwise. The sullen door
Yet uninfected, on its cautious hinge
Fearing to turn, abhors society :
Dependants, friends, relations, Love himself,
Savage by woe, forget the tender tie,
The sweet engagement of the feeling heart.
But vain their selfish care : the circling sky,
The wide enlivening air, is full of fate ;
And, struck by turns, in solitary pangs
They fall, unblest, untended, and unmourn'd.

|| These are the causes supposed to be the first origin of the plague, in Dr. Mead's elegant book on that subject.

Thus o'er the prostrate city black Despair
Extends her raven wing ; while to complete
The scene of desolation, stretch'd around,
The grim guards stand, denying all retreat,
And give the flying wretch a better death.

Much yet remains unsung : the rage intense
Of brazen-vaulted skies, of iron fields,
Where drought and famine starve the blasted year :
Fired by the torch of noon to tenfold rage,
The infuriate hill that shoots the pillar'd flame,
And, roused within the subterranean world,
The expanding earthquake, that resistless shakes
Aspiring cities from their solid base,
And buries mountains in the flaming gulf.
But 'tis enough ; return, my vagrant Muse :
A nearer scene of horror calls thee home.

Behold, slow-settling o'er the lurid grove,
Unusual darkness broods, and, growing, gains
The full possession of the sky, surcharged
With wrathful vapour, from the secret beds,
Where sleep the mineral generations, drawn.
Thence nitre, sulphur, and the fiery spume
Of fat bitumen, steaming on the day,
With various-tinctured trains of latent flame,
Pollute the sky, and in yon baneful cloud
A reddening gloom, a magazine of fate,
Ferment ; till, by the touch ethereal roused,
The dash of clouds, or irritating war
Of fighting winds, while all is calm below,
They furious spring. A boding silence reigns,
Dread through the dun expanse ; save the dull sound
That from the mountain, previous to the storm,
Rolls o'er the muttering earth, disturbs the flood,
And shakes the forest-leaf without a breath.
Prone, to the lowest vale, the ærial tribes
Descend : the tempest-loving raven scarce
Dares wing the dubious dusk. In rueful gaze
The cattle stand, and on the scowling heavens
Cast a deploring eye ; by man forsook,
Who to the crowded cottage hies him fast,
Or seeks the shelter of the downward cave.
'Tis listening fear, and dumb amazement all :
When to the startled eye the sudden glance
Appears far south, eruptive through the cloud ;
And following slower, in explosion vast,
The Thunder raises his tremendous voice.
At first, heard solemn o'er the verge of heaven,
The tempest growls ; but as it nearer comes,
And rolls its awful burden on the wind,
The lightnings flash a larger curve, and more
The noise astounds : till over head a sheet
Of livid flame discloses wide ; then shuts,
And opens wider ; shuts and opens still
Expansive, wrapping ether in a blaze.
Follows the loosen'd aggravated roar,
Enlarging, deepening, mingling ; peal on peal
Crush'd horrible, convulsing heaven and earth.

Down comes a deluge of sonorous hail,
Or prone-descending rain. Wide-rent, the clouds
Pour a whole flood ; and yet, its flame unquench'd,
The unconquerable lightning struggles through
Ragged and fierce, or in red whirling balls,
And fires the mountains with redoubled rage.
Black from the stroke, above, the smouldering pine
Stands a sad shatter'd trunk ; and, stretch'd below,
A lifeless group the blasted cattle lie :
Here the soft flocks, with that same harmless look
They were alive, and ruminating still
In fancy's eye ; and there the frowning bull,
And ox half-raised. Struck on the castled cliff,

The venerable tower and spiry fane
Resign their aged pride. The gloomy woods
Start at the flash, and from their deep recess,
Wide-flaming out, their trembling inmates shake.
Amid Carnarvon's mountains rages loud
The repercussive roar : with mighty crash,
Into the flashing deep, from the rude rocks
Of Penmanmaur heap'd hideous to the sky,
Tumble the smitten cliffs : and Snowden's peak,
Dissolving, instant yields his wintry load.
Far seen, the heights of heathy Cheviot blaze,
And Thule bellows through her utmost isles.

Guilt hears appall'd, with deeply-troubled thought ;
And yet not always on the guilty head
Descends the fated flash. Young Celadon
And his Amelia were a matchless pair ;
With equal virtue form'd, and equal grace,
The same, distinguish'd by their sex alone :
Hers, the mild lustre of the blooming morn,
And his, the radiance of the risen day.

They loved : but such their guileless passion was
As in the dawn of time inform'd the heart
Of innocence and undissembling truth.
'Twas friendship, heighten'd by the mutual wish ;
The enchanting hope, and sympathetic glow,
Beam'd from the mutual eye. Devoting all
To love, each was to each a dearer self ;
Supremely happy in the awaken'd power
Of giving joy. Alone, amid the shades,
Still in harmonious intercourse they lived
The rural day, and talk'd the flowing heart,
Or sigh'd and look'd unutterable things.

So pass'd their life, a clear united stream,
By care unruffled ; till, in evil hour,
The tempest caught them on the tender walk,
Heedless how far and where its mazes stray'd,
While, with each other blest, creative love
Still bade eternal Eden smile around.
Presaging instant fate, her bosom heaved
Unwonted sighs, and, stealing oft a look
Of the big gloom, on Celadon her eye
Fell tearful, wetting her disorder'd cheek.
In vain assuring love, and confidence
In Heaven, repress'd her fear ; it grew, and shook
Her frame near dissolution. He perceived
The unequal conflict, and, as angels look
On dying saints, his eyes compassion shed,
With love illumined high. " Fear not," he said,
" Sweet innocence ! thou stranger to offence,
And inward storm ! He, who yon skies involves
In frowns of darkness, ever smiles on thee
With kind regard. O'er thee the secret shaft
That wastes at midnight, or the undreaded hour
Of noon, flies harmless ; and that very voice,
Which thunders terror through the guilty heart,
With tongues of seraphs whispers peace to thine.
'Tis safety to be near thee sure, and thus
To clasp perfection !" From his void embrace,
(Mysterious Heaven !) that moment, to the ground,
A blacken'd corse, was struck the beauteous maid.
But who can paint the lover, as he stood,
Pierced by severe amazement, hating life,
Speechless, and fix'd in all the death of woe !
So (faint resemblance !) on the marble tomb,
The well-dissembled mourner stooping stands,
For ever silent, and for ever sad.

As from the face of heaven the shatter'd clouds
Tumultuous rove, the interminable sky
Sublimar swells, and o'er the world expands
A purer azure. Through the lighten'd air

A higher lustre and a clearer calm,
Diffusive, tremble ; while, as if in sign
Of danger past, a glittering robe of joy,
Set off abundant by the yellow ray,
Invests the fields, and Nature smiles revived.

'Tis beauty all, and grateful song around,
Join'd to the low of kine, and numerous bleat
Of flocks thick-nibbling through the clover'd vale.
And shall the hymn be marr'd by thankless man,
Most favour'd ! who with voice articulate
Should lead the chorus of this lower world ;
Shall he, so soon forgetful of the Hand
That hush'd the thunder, and serenest the sky,
Extinguish'd feel that spark the tempest wak'd,
That sense of powers exceeding far his own,
Ere yet his feeble heart has lost its fears ?

Cheer'd by the milder beam, the sprightly youth
Speeds to the well-known pool, whose crystal depth
A sandy bottom shows. A while he stands
Gazing the inverted landscape, half afraid
To meditate the blue profound below ;
Then plunges headlong down the circling flood.
His ebon tresses and his rosy cheek
Instant emerge ; and through the obedient wave,
At each short breathing by his lip repell'd,
With arms and legs according well, he makes,
As humour leads, an easy-winding path ;
While, from his polish'd sides, a dewy light
Effuses on the pleased spectators round.

This is the purest exercise of health,
The kind refresher of the summer heats ;
Nor, when cold Winter keens the brightening flood,
Would I, weak-shivering, linger on the brink.
Thus life redoubles, and is oft preserved,
By the bold swimmer, in the swift ilapse
Of accident disastrous. Hence the limbs
Knit into force ; and the same Roman arm,
That rose victorious o'er the conquer'd earth,
First learn'd, while tender, to subdue the wave.
Even from the body's purity the mind
Receives a secret sympathetic aid.

Close in the covert of a hazel copse,
Where, winded into pleasing solitudes,
Runs out the rambling dale, young Damon sat,
Pensive, and pierced with love's delightful pangs.
There to the stream that down the distant rocks
Hoarse murmuring fell, and plaintive breeze that
play'd

Among the bending willows, falsely he
Of Musidora's cruelty complain'd.
She felt his flame ; but deep within her breast,
In bashful coyness, or in maiden pride,
The soft return conceal'd, save when it stole
In side-long glances from her downcast eye,
Or from her swelling soul in stifled sighs.
Touch'd by the scene, no stranger to his vows,
He framed a melting lay to try her heart ;
And, if an infant passion struggled there,
To call that passion forth. Thrice happy swain !
A lucky chance, that oft decides the fate
Of mighty monarchs, then decided thine.
For lo ! conducted by the laughing Loves,
This cool retreat his Musidora sought :
Warm in her cheek the sultry season glow'd ;
And, robed in loose array she came to bathe
Her fervent limbs in the refreshing stream.
What shall he do ? In sweet confusion lost,
And dubious flutterings, he awhile remain'd ;
A pure ingenuous elegance of soul,
A delicate refinement, known to few,

Perplex'd his breast, and urged him to retire :
But love forbade. Ye prudes in virtue, say,
Say, ye severest, what would you have done ?
Meantime, this fairer nymph than ever blest
Arcadian stream, with timid eye around
The banks surveying, stripp'd her beauteous
limbs,

To taste the lucid coolness of the flood.
Ah then ! not Paris on the piny top
Of Ida panted stronger, when aside
The rival goddesses the veil divine
Cast unconfined, and gave him all their charms,
Than, Damon, thou ; as from the snowy leg,
And slender foot, the inverted silk she drew ;
As the soft touch dissolved the virgin zone ;
And through the parting robe, the alternate breast,
With youth wild-throbbing, on thy lawless gaze
In full luxuriance rose. But, desperate youth,
How durst thou risk the soul-distracting view,
As from her naked limbs, of glowing white,
Harmonious swell'd by Nature's finest hand,
In folds loose-floating fell the fainter lawn ;
And fair-exposed she stood, shrunk from herself,
With fancy blushing, at the doubtful breeze
Alarm'd, and starting like the fearful fawn ?
Then to the flood she rush'd ; the parted flood
Its lovely guest with closing waves received ;
And every beauty softening, every grace
Flushing anew, a mellow lustre shed :
As shines the lily through the crystal mild ;
Or as the rose amid the morning dew,
Fresh from Aurora's hand, more sweetly glows.
While thus she wanton'd, now beneath the wave
But ill conceal'd, and now with streaming locks,
That half embraced her in a humid veil,
Rising again, the latent Damon drew
Such maddening draughts of beauty to the soul,
As for awhile o'erwhelm'd his raptured thought
With luxury too daring. Check'd, at last,
By love's respectful modesty, he deem'd
The theft profane, if aught profane to love
Can e'er be deem'd ; and, struggling from the
shade,

With headlong hurry fled : but first these lines,
Traced by his ready pencil, on the bank
With trembling hand he threw. " Bathe on, my
Yet unheh'd, save by the sacred eye [fair,
Of faithful love : I go to guard thy haunt,
To keep from thy recess each vagrant foot,
And each licentious eye." With wild surprise,
As if to marble struck, devoid of sense,
A stupid moment motionless she stood :
So stands the statue* that enchants the world,
So bending tries to veil the matchless boast,
The mingled beauties of exulting Greece.
Recovering, swift she flew to find those robes
Which blissful Eden knew not ; and, array'd
In careless haste, the alarming paper snatch'd.
But, when her Damon's well-known hand she saw,
Her terrors vanish'd, and a softer train
Of mix'd emotions, hard to be described,
Her sudden bosom seized : shame void of guilt,
The charming blush of innocence, esteem,
And admiration of her lover's flame,
By modesty exalted : even a sense
Of self-approving beauty stole across
Her busy thought. At length a tender calm
Hush'd by degrees the tumult of her soul ;

* The Venus de' Medici.

And on the spreading beech, that o'er the stream
Incumbent hung, she with the silvan pen
Of rural lovers this confession carved,
Which soon her Damon kiss'd with weeping joy :

" Dear youth, sole judge of what these verses
mean,

By fortune too much favour'd, but by love,
Alas ! not favour'd less, be still as now
Discreet : the time may come you need not fly."

The sun has lost his rage : his downward orb
Shoots nothing now but animating warmth,
And vital lustre ; that, with various ray,
Lights up the clouds, those beauteous robes of
heaven,

Incessant roll'd into romantic shapes,
The dream of waking Fancy. Broad below,
Cover'd with ripening fruits, and swelling fast
Into the perfect year, the pregnant earth
And all her tribes rejoice. Now the soft hour
Of walking comes : for him who lonely loves
To seek the distant hills, and there converse
With Nature ; there to harmonise his heart,
And in pathetic song to breathe around
The harmony to others. Social friends,
Attuned to happy unison of soul ;

To whose exalting eye a fairer world,
Of which the vulgar never had a glimpse,
Displays its charms ; whose minds are richly fraught
With philosophic stores, superior light ;
And in whose breast, enthusiastic, burns
Virtue, the sons of interest deem romance ;
Now call'd abroad enjoy the falling day :
Now to the verdant Portico of woods,
To Nature's vast Lyceum forth they walk ;
By that kind school where no proud master reigns,
The full free converse of the friendly heart,
Improving and improved. Now from the world,
Sacred to sweet retirement, lovers steal,
And pour their souls in transport, which the sire
Of love approving hears, and calls it good.

Which way, Amanda, shall we bend our course ?
The choice perplexes. Wherefore should we chuse ?

All is the same with thee. Say, shall we wind
Along the streams ? or walk the smiling mead ?
Or court the forest-glades ? or wander wild

Among the waving harvests ? or ascend,
While radiant Summer opens all its pride,

Thy hill, delightful Shene* ? Here let us sweep
The boundless landscape : now the raptur'd eye,
Exulting, swift to huge Augusta send,
Now to the Sister-Hills† that skirt her plain ;

To lofty Harrow now, and now to where
Majestic Windsor lifts his princely brow.

In lovely contrast to this glorious view,
Calmly magnificent, then will we turn
To where the silver Thames first rural grows.

There let the feasted eye unweari'd stray :
Luxurious, there, rove through the pendent woods
That nodding hang o'er Harrington's retreat :

And, stooping thence to Han's embowering walks,
Beneath whose shades, in spotless peace retired,

With Her the pleasing partner of his heart,
The worthy Queensberry yet laments his Gay,

And polish'd Cornbury woes the willing Muse,
Slow let us trace the matchless vale of Thames ;

Fair winding up to where the muses haunt

In Twick'nam's bowers, and for their Pope implore
The healing God† ; to royal Hampton's pile,
To Clermont's terraced height, and Escher's groves,
Where in the sweetest solitude, embraced
By the soft windings of the silent Mole,
From courts and senates Pelham finds repose.
Enchanting vale ! beyond whatever the Muse
Has of Achaia or Hesperia sung !

O vale of bliss ! O softly-swelling hills !
On which the Power of Cultivation lies,
And joys to see the wonders of his toil.

Heavens ! what a goodly prospect spreads around,
Of hills, and dales, and woods, and lawns, and spires,
And glittering towns, and gilded streams, till all
The stretching landscape into smoke decays !
Happy Britannia ! where the Queen of Arts,
Inspiring vigour, Liberty abroad
Walks unconfined, even to thy farthest cots,
And scatters plenty with unsparing hand.

Rich is thy soil, and merciful thy clime ;
Thy streams unfailing in the Summer's drought ;
Unmatch'd thy guardian oaks ; thy valleys float
With golden waves ; and on thy mountains flocks
Bleat numberless ; while, roving round their sides,
Bellow the blackening herds in lusty droves.
Beneath, thy meadows glow, and rise unquell'd
Against the mower's scythe. On every hand
Thy villas shine. Thy country teems with wealth ;
And property assures it to the swain,
Pleased, and unweari'd, in his guarded toil.

Full are thy cities with the sons of Art :
And trade and joy, in every busy street,
Mingling are heard : e'en Drudgery himself,
As at the car he sweats, or dusty hews
The palace-stone, looks gay. Thy crowded ports,
Where rising masts an endless prospect yield,
With labour burn, and echo to the shouts
Of hurried sailor, as he hearty waves
His last adieu, and loosening every sheet,
Resigns the spreading vessel to the wind.

Bold, firm, and graceful, are thy generous youth,
By hardship sinew'd, and by danger fired,
Scattering the nations where they go ; and first
Or on the listed plain, or stormy seas.

Mild are thy glories too, as o'er the plains
Of thriving peace thy thoughtful sires preside ;
In genius, and substantial learning, high ;
For every virtue, every worth, renown'd ;
Sincere, plain-hearted, hospitable, kind ;
Yet like the mustering thunder when provoked,
The dread of tyrants, and the sole resource
Of those that under grim oppression groan.

Thy sons of Glory many ! Alfred thine,
In whom the splendour of heroic war,
And more heroic peace, when govern'd well,
Combine ; whose hallow'd name the Virtues saint,
And his own Muses love ; the best of kings !
With him thy Edwards and thy Henries shine,
Names dear to fame ; the first who deep impress'd
On haughty Gaul the terror of thy arms,
That awes her genius still. In statesmen thou,
And patriots, fertile. Thine a steady More,
Who, with a generous though mistaken zeal,
Withstood a brutal tyrant's useful rage,
Like Cato firm, like Aristides just,
Like rigid Cineinnatus nobly poor,
A dauntless soul erect, who smiled on death.
Frugal and wise, a Walsingham is thine ;
A Drake, who made thee mistress of the deep,

* The old name of Richmond ; signifying, in Saxon,
shining or splendour.

† Highgate and Hampstead.

‡ In his last sickness.

And bore thy name in thunder round the world.
Then flamed thy spirit high ; but who can speak
The numerous worthies of the Maiden Reign ?
In Raleigh mark their every glory mix'd ; [all
Raleigh, the scourge of Spain ! whose breast with
The sage, the patriot, and the hero burn'd ;
Nor sunk his vigour, when a coward reign
The warrior fetter'd, and at last resign'd,
To glut the vengeance of a vanquish'd foe.
Then, active still and unrestrain'd, his mind
Explored the vast extent of ages past,
And with his prison-hours enrich'd the world ;
Yet found no times, in all the long research,
So glorious, or so base, as those he proved,
In which he conquer'd, and in which he bled.
Nor can the Muse the gallant Sidney pass,
The plume of war ! with early laurels crown'd,
The lover's myrtle, and the poet's bay.
A Hampden too is thine, illustrious land !
Wise, strenuous, firm, of unsubmitting soul,
Who stemm'd the torrent of a downward age
To slavery prone, and bade thee rise again
In all thy native pomp of freedom bold.
Bright, at his call, thy Age of Men effulged,
Of men on whom late time a kindling eye
Shall turn, and tyrants tremble while they read.
Bring every sweetest flower, and let me strew
The grave where Russel lies ; whose temper'd
blood,

With calmest cheerfulness for thee resign'd,
Stain'd the sad annals of a giddy reign ;
Aiming at lawless power, though meanly sunk
In loose inglorious luxury. With him
His friend, the British Cassius *, fearless bled ;
Of high determined spirit, roughly brave,
By ancient learning to the enlighten'd love
Of ancient freedom warm'd. Fair thy renown
In awful sages and in noble bards ;
Soon as the light of dawning Science spread
Her orient ray, and waked the Muses' song.
Thine is a Bacon ; hapless in his choice,
Unfit to stand the civil storm of state,
And through the smooth barbarity of courts,
With firm but pliant virtue, forward still
To urge his course : him for the studious shade
Kind Nature form'd, deep, comprehensive, clear,
Exact, and elegant : in one rich soul
Plato, the Stagyrte, and Tully, join'd.
The great deliverer he ! who from the gloom
Of cloister'd monks, and jargon-teaching schools,
Led forth the true Philosophy, there long
Held in the magic chain of words and forms,
And definitions void : he led her forth,
Daughter of Heaven ! that slow ascending still,
Investigating sure the chain of things,
With radiant finger points to Heaven again.
The generous Ashley † thine, the friend of man ;
Who scan'd his nature with a brother's eye,
His weakness prompt to shade, to raise his aim,
To touch the finer movements of the mind,
And with the moral beauty charm the heart.
Why need I name thy Boyle, whose pious search
Amid the dark recesses of his works
The great Creator sought ? And why thy Locke,
Who made the whole internal world his own ?
Let Newton, pure intelligence, whom God
To mortals lent, to trace his boundless works

From laws sublimely simple, speak thy fame
In all philosophy. For lofty sense,
Creative fancy, and inspection keen
Through the deep windings of the human heart,
Is not wild Shakspeare thine and Nature's boast ?
Is not each great, each amiable Muse
Of classic ages in thy Milton met ?
A genius universal as his theme,
Astonishing as Chaos, as the bloom
Of blowing Eden fair, as Heaven sublime ?
Nor shall my verse that elder bard forget,
The gentle Spenser, Fancy's pleasing son ;
Who, like a copious river, pour'd his song
O'er all the mazes of enchanted ground :
Nor thee, his ancient master, laughing sage,
Chaucer, whose native manners-painting verse,
Well moralised, shines through the Gothic cloud
Of time and language o'er thy genius thrown.
May my song soften, as thy daughters I,
Britannia, hail ! for beauty is their own,
The feeling heart, simplicity of life,
And elegance, and taste : the faultless form,
Shaped by the hand of Harmony ; the cheek,
Where the live crimson, through the native white
Soft-shooting, o'er the face diffuses bloom,
And every nameless grace ; the parted lip,
Like the red rose-bud moist with morning-dew,
Breathing delight ; and, under flowing jet,
Or sunny ringlets, or of circling brown,
The neck slight-shaded, and the swelling breast ;
The look restless, piercing to the soul,
And by the soul inform'd, when dress'd in love
She sits high-smiling in the conscious eye.

Island of bliss ! amid the subject seas,
That thunder round thy rocky coasts, set up,
At once, the wonder, terror, and delight,
Of distant nations, whose remotest shores
Can soon be shaken by thy naval arm ;
Not to be shook thyself, but all assaults
Baffling, as thy hoar cliffs the loud sea-wave.

O Thou ! by whose Almighty nod the scale
Of empire rises, or alternate falls,
Send forth the saving Virtues round the land,
In bright patrol : white Peace, and social Love ;
The tender-looking Charity, intent
On gentle deeds, and shedding tears through smiles ;
Undaunted Truth, and Dignity of mind ;
Courage composed, and keen ; sound Temperance,
Healthful in heart and look ; clear Chastity,
With blushes reddening as she moves along,
Disorder'd at the deep regard she draws ;
Rough Industry ; Activity untired,
With copious life inform'd, and all awake ;
While in the radiant front superior shines
That first paternal virtue, Public Zeal ;
Who throws o'er all an equal wide survey,
And, ever musing on the common weal,
Still labours glorious with some great design.

Low walks the sun, and broadens by degrees,
Just o'er the verge of day. The shifting clouds
Assembled gay, a richly gorgeous train,
In all their pomp attend his setting throne.
Air, earth, and ocean smile immense. And now,
As if his weary chariot sought the bowers
Of Amphitrite, and her tending nymphs,
(So Grecian fable sung) he dips his orb ;
Now half-immersed, and now a golden curve,
Gives one bright glance, then total disappears.

For ever running an enchanted round,
Passes the day, deceitful, vain, and void ;

* Algernon Sidney.

† Anthony Ashley Cooper, earl of Shaftesbury.

As fleets the vision o'er the formful brain,
This moment hurrying wild the impassion'd soul,
The next in nothing lost. 'Tis so to him,
The dreamer of this earth, an idle blank :
A sight of horror to the cruel wretch,
Who all day long in sordid pleasure roll'd,
Himself a useless load, has squander'd vile,
Upon his scoundrel train, what might have cheer'd
A drooping family of modest worth.
But to the generous still-improving mind,
That gives the hopeless heart to sing for joy,
Diffusing kind beneficence around,
Boastless, as now descends the silent dew ;
To him the long review of order'd life
Is inward rapture, only to be felt.

Confess'd from yonder slow-extinguish'd cloud,
All ether softening, sober Evening takes
Her wonted station in the middle air ;
A thousand shadows at her beck. First this
She sends on earth ; then that of deeper dye
Steals soft behind ; and then a deeper still,
In circle following circle, gathers round,
To close the face of things. A fresher gale
Begins to wave the wood, and stir the stream,
Sweeping with shadowy gust the fields of corn ;
While the quail clamours for his running mate.
Wide o'er the thistly lawn, as swells the breeze,
A whitening shower of vegetable down
Amusive floats. The kind impartial care
Of Nature nought disdains : thoughtful to feed
Her lowest sons, and clothe the coming year,
From field to field the feather'd seed she wings.

His folded flock secure, the shepherd home
Hies, merry-hearted ; and by turns relieves
The ruddy milkmaid of her brimming pail ;
The beauty whom perhaps his witless heart,
Unknowing what the joy-mix'd anguish means,
Sincerely loves, by that best language shown
Of cordial glances, and obliging deeds.
Onward they pass, o'er many a panting height,
And valley sunk, and unfrequented ; where
At fall of eve the fairy people throng,
In various game, and revelry, to pass
The summer night, as village-stories tell.
But far about they wander from the grave
Of him, whom his ungentle fortune urged
Against his own sad breast to lift the hand
Of impious violence. The lonely tower
Is also shunn'd ; whose mournful chambers hold,
So night-struck Fancy dreams, the yelling ghost.

Among the crooked lanes, on every hedge,
The glow-worm lights his gems ; and, through the
dark,

A moving radiance twinkles. Evening yields
The world to Night ; not in her winter robe
Of massy Stygian woof, but loose array'd
In mantle dun. A faint erroneous ray,
Glanced from the imperfect surfaces of things,
Flings half an image on the straining eye ;
While wavering woods, and villages and streams,
And rocks, and mountain-tops, that long retain'd
The ascending gleam, are all one swimming scene,
Uncertain if beheld. Sudden to heaven
Thence weary vision turns, where, leading soft
The silent hours of love, with purest ray
Sweet Venus shines ; and from her genial rise,
When day-light sickens till it springs afresh,
Unrivall'd reigns, the fairest lamp of Night.
As thus th' effulgence tremulous I drink,
With cherish'd gaze, the lambent lightnings shoot

Across the sky, or horizontal dart
In wondrous shapes : by fearful murmuring crowds
Portentous deem'd. Amid the radiant orbs
That more than deck, that animate the sky,
The life-infusing suns of other worlds ;
Lo ! from the dread immensity of space
Returning, with accelerated course,
The rushing comet to the sun descends ;
And as he sinks below the shading earth,
With awful train projected o'er the heavens,
The guilty nations tremble. But, above
Those superstitious horrors that enslave
The fond sequacious herd, to mystic faith
And blind amazement prone, the enlightened few,
Whose godlike minds Philosophy exalts,
The glorious stranger hail. They feel a joy
Divinely great ; they in their powers exult,
That wondrous force of thought which mounting
spurns

This dusky spot, and measures all the sky ;
While, from his far excursion through the wilds
Of barren ether, faithful to his time,
They see the blazing wonder rise anew,
In seeming terror clad, but kindly bent
To work the will of all-sustaining Love :
From his huge vapoury train perhaps to shake
Reviving moisture on the numerous orbs,
Through which his long ellipsis winds ; perhaps
To lend new fuel to declining suns,
To light up worlds, and feed the eternal fire.

With thee, serene Philosophy, with thee,
And thy bright garland, let me crown my song !
Effusive source of evidence, and truth !
A lustre shedding o'er the ennobled mind,
Stronger than summer-noon ; and pure as that
Whose mild vibrations soothe the parted soul,
New to the dawning of celestial day.
Hence through her nourish'd powers, enlarged by
She springs aloft with elevated pride, [thee,
Above the tangling mass of low desires,
That bind the fluttering crowd, and, angel-wing'd,
The heights of science and of virtue gains,
Where all is calm and clear ; with Nature round,
Or in the starry regions, or the abyss,
To Reason's and to Fancy's eye display'd :
The first up-tracing, from the dreary void,
The chain of causes and effects to Him,
The world-producing Essence, who alone
Possesses being ; while the last receives
The whole magnificence of heaven and earth,
And every beauty, delicate or bold,
Obvious or more remote, with livelier sense,
Diffusive painted on the rapid mind.

Tutor'd by thee, hence Poetry exalts
Her voice to ages, and informs the page
With music, image, sentiment, and thought,
Never to die ! the treasure of mankind !
Their highest honour, and their truest joy !

Without thee what were unenlighten'd man ?
A savage roaming through the woods and wilds
In quest of prey ; and with the unfashion'd fur
Rough clad ; devoid of every finer art,
And elegance of life. Nor happiness
Domestic, mix'd of tenderness and care,
Nor moral excellence, nor social bliss,
Nor guardian law were his ; nor various skil.
To turn the furrow, or to guide the tool
Mechanic, nor the heaven-conducted prow
Of navigation bold, that fearless braves
The burning line or dares the wintry pole ;

Mother severe of infinite delights !
Nothing, save rapine, indolence, and guile,
And woes on woes, a still-revolving train !
Whose horrid circle had made human life
Than non-existence worse : but, taught by thee,
Ours are the plans of policy and peace,
To live like brothers, and conjunctive all
Embellish life. While thus laborious crowds
Ply the tough oar, Philosophy directs
The ruling helm ; or, like the liberal breath
Of potent Heaven, invisible, the sail
Swells out, and bears the inferior world along.

Nor to this evanescent speck of earth
Poorly confined, the radiant tracts on high
Are her exalted range ; intent to gaze
Creation through ; and, from that full complex
Of never-ending wonders, to conceive
Of the Sole Being right, who spoke the Word,

And Nature moved complete. With inward view,
Thence on the ideal kingdom swift she turns
Her eye ; and, instant, at her powerful glance,
The obedient phantoms vanish or appear ;
Compound, divide, and into order shift,
Each to his rank, from plain perception up
To the fair forms of Fancy's fleeting train :
To reason then, deducing truth from truth ;
And notion quite abstract ; where first begins
The world of spirits, action all, and life
Unfetter'd and unmix'd. But here the cloud
(So wills eternal Providence) sits deep.
Enough for us to know that this dark state,
In wayward passions lost, and vain pursuits,
This infancy of being, cannot prove
The final issue of the works of God,
By boundless Love and perfect Wisdom form'd,
And ever rising with the rising mind.

AUTUMN.

ARGUMENT.

The subject proposed. Addressed to Mr. Onslow. A prospect of the fields ready for harvest. Reflections in praise of industry, raised by that view. Reaping. A tale relative to it. A harvest-storm. Shooting and hunting; their barbarity. A ludicrous account of fox-hunting. A view of an orchard. Wall-fruit. A vineyard. A description of fogs frequent in the latter part of Autumn; whence a digression, inquiring into the rise of fountains and rivers. Birds of season considered, that now shift their habitation. The prodigious number of them that cover the northern and western isles of Scotland. Hence a view of the country. A prospect of the discoloured, fading woods. After a gentle dusky day, moonlight. Autumnal meteors. Morning: to which succeeds a calm, pure, sunshiny day, such as usually shuts up the season. The harvest being gathered in, the country dissolved in joy. The whole concludes with a panegyric on a philosophical country life.

CROWN'D with the sickle and the wheaten sheaf,
While Autumn, nodding o'er the yellow plain,
Comes jovial on; the Doric reed once more,
Well pleased, I tune. Whate'er the wintry frost
Nitrous prepared; the various-blossom'd Spring
Put in white promise forth; and Summer-suns
Concocted strong, rush boundless now to view,
Full, perfect all, and swell my glorious theme.

Onslow! the Muse, ambitious of thy name,
To grace, inspire, and dignify her song,
Would from the public voice thy gentle ear
Awhile engage. Thy noble cares she knows,
The patriot virtues that distend thy thought,
Spread on thy front, and in thy bosom glow;
While listening senates hang upon thy tongue,
Devolving through the maze of eloquence
A roll of periods, sweeter than her song.
But she too pants for public virtue, she,
Though weak of power, yet strong in ardent will,
Whene'er her country rushes on her heart,
Assumes a bolder note, and fondly tries
To mix the patriot's with the poet's flame.

When the bright Virgin gives the beauteous days,
And Libra weighs in equal scales the year;
From heaven's high cope the fierce effulgence
Of parting Summer, a serener blue, [shook
With golden light enliven'd, wide invests
The happy world. Attemper'd suns arise,
Sweet-beam'd, and shedding oft through lucid clouds
A pleasing calm; while broad, and brown, below
Extensive harvests hang the heavy head.
Rich, silent, deep, they stand; for not a gale
Rolls its light billows o'er the bending plain:
A calm of plenty! till the ruffled air
Falls from its poise, and gives the breeze to blow.

Rent is the fleecy mantle of the sky;
The clouds fly different; and the sudden sun
By fits effulgent gilds the illumined field,
And black by fits the shadows sweep along:
A gaily-checker'd heart-expanding view,
Far as the circling eye can shoot around,
Unbounded tossing in a flood of corn.

These are thy blessings, Industry! rough power!
Whom labour still attends, and sweat and pain;
Yet the kind source of every gentle art,
And all the soft civility of life:
Raiser of human kind! by Nature cast,
Naked, and helpless, out amid the woods
And wilds, to rude inclement elements;
With various seeds of art deep in the mind
Implanted, and profusely pour'd around,
Materials infinite, but idle all.
Still unexerted, in the unconscious breast,
Slept the lethargic powers; Corruption still,
Voracious, swallow'd what the liberal hand
Of bounty scatter'd o'er the savage year:
And still the sad barbarian, roving, mix'd
With beasts of prey; or for his acorn-meal
Fought the fierce tusky boar; a shivering wretch!
Aghast, and comfortless, when the bleak north,
With Winter charged, let the mix'd tempest fly,
Hail, rain, and snow, and bitter-breathing frost:
Then to the shelter of the hut he fled;
And the wild season, sordid, pined away.
For home he had not; home is the resort
Of love, of joy, of peace and plenty, where,
Supporting and supported, polish'd friends,
And dear relations, mingle into bliss.
But this the rugged savage never felt,
Even desolate in crowds; and thus his days
Roll'd heavy, dark, and unenjoy'd along,
A waste of time! till Industry approach'd,
And roused him from his miserable sloth:
His faculties unfolded; pointed out,
Where lavish Nature the directing hand
Of Art demanded; show'd him how to raise
His feeble force by the mechanic powers,
To dig the mineral from the vaulted earth,
On what to turn the piercing rage of fire,
On what the torrent, and the gather'd blast;
Gave the tall ancient forest to his axe;
Taught him to chip the wood, and hew the stone,
Till by degrees the finish'd fabric rose;
Tore from his limbs the blood-polluted fur,
And wrapt them in the woolly vestment warm,
Or bright in glossy silk, and flowing lawn,
With wholesome viands fill'd his table, pour'd
The generous glass around, inspired to wake

The life-refining soul of decent wit,
Nor stopp'd at barren bare necessity ;
But still advancing bolder, led him on
To pomp, to pleasure, elegance, and grace ;
And, breathing high ambition through his soul,
Set science, wisdom, glory, in his view,
And bade him be the lord of all below. [bined,

Then gathering men their natural powers com-
And form'd a Public ; to the general good
Submitting, aiming, and conducting all.
For this the Patriot-Council met, the full,
The free, and fairly represented Whole ;
For this they plann'd the holy guardian laws,
Distinguish'd orders, animated arts,
And, with joint force Oppression chaining, set
Imperial Justice at the helm, yet still
To them accountable : nor slavish dream'd
That toiling millions must resign their weal,
And all the honey of their search, to such
As for themselves alone themselves have raised.

Hence every form of cultivated life
In order set, protected, and inspired,
Into perfection wrought. Uniting all,
Society grew numerous, high, polite,
And happy. Nurse of art ! the city rear'd
In beauteous pride her tower-encircled head ;
And, stretching street on street, by thousands drew,
From twining woody haunts, or the tough yew
To bows strong-straining, her aspiring sons.

Then Commerce brought into the public walk
The busy merchant ; the big warehouse built ;
Raised the strong crane ; choked up the loaded street
With foreign plenty ; and thy stream, O Thames,
Large, gentle, deep, majestic, king of floods !
Chose for his grand resort. On either hand,
Like a long wintry forest, groves of masts
Shot up their spires ; the belling sheet between
Possess'd the breezy void ; the sooty hulk
Steer'd sluggish on ; the splendid barge along
Row'd, regular, to harmony ; around,
The boat, light-skimming, stretch'd its oary wings ;
While deep the various voice of fervent toil [oak,
From bank to bank increased ; whence ribb'd with
To hear the British thunder, black and bold,
The roaring vessel rush'd into the main.

Then too the pillar'd dome, magnific, heaved
Its ample roof ; and Luxury within
Pour'd out her glittering stores : the canvas smooth,
With glowing life protuberant, to the view
Embodied rose ; the statue seem'd to breathe,
And soften into flesh, beneath the touch
Of forming art, imagination-flush'd.

All is the gift of industry ! what'er
Exalts, embellishes, and renders life
Delightful. Pensive Winter, cheer'd by him,
Sits at the social fire, and happy hears
The excluded tempest idly rave along ;
His harden'd fingers deck the gaudy Spring ;
Without him Summer were an arid waste ;
Nor to the autumnal months could thus transmit
Those full, mature, immeasurable stores,
That, waving round, recal my wandering song.

Soon as the morning trembles o'er the sky,
And, unperceived, unfolds the spreading day ;
Before the ripen'd field the reapers stand,
In fair array, each by the lass he loves,
To bear the rougher part, and mitigate
By nameless gentle offices her toil.
At once they stoop, and swell the lusty sheaves ;
While through their cheerful band the rural talk,

The rural scandal, and the rural jest,
Fly harmless to deceive the tedious time,
And steal unfelt the sultry hours away.
Behind the master walks, builds up the shocks ;
And, conscious, glancing oft on every side
His sated eye, feels his heart heave with joy.
The gleaners spread around, and here and there,
Spike after spike, their scanty harvest pick.
Be not too narrow, husbandmen ! but fling
From the full sheaf, with charitable stealth,
The liberal handful. Think, oh grateful think !
How good the God of Harvest is to you ;
Who pours abundance o'er your flowing fields ;
While these unhappy partners of your kind
Wide-hover round you, like the fowls of heaven,
And ask their humble dole. The various turns
Of fortune ponder ; that your sons may want
What now, with hard reluctance, faint, ye give.

The lovely young Lavinia once had friends ;
And fortune smiled, deceitful, on her birth.
For, in her helpless years deprived of all,
Of every stay, save Innocence and Heaven,
She, with her widow'd mother, feeble, old,
And poor, lived in a cottage, far retired
Among the windings of a woody vale ;
By solitude and deep surrounding shades,
But more by bashful modesty, conceal'd.
Together thus they shunn'd the cruel scorn
Which virtue, sunk to poverty, would meet
From giddy passion and low-minded pride ;
Almost on Nature's common bounty fed ;
Like the gay birds that sung them to repose,
Content, and careless of to-morrow's fare.
Her form was fresher than the morning rose,
When the dew wets its leaves ; unstain'd and pure
As is the lily, or the mountain snow.
The modest Virtues mingled in her eyes,
Still on the ground dejected, darting all
Their humid beams into the blooming flowers :
Or when the mournful tale her mother told,
Of what her faithless fortune promised once,
Thrill'd in her thought, they, like the dewy star
Of evening, shone in tears. A native grace
Sat fair-proportion'd on her polish'd limbs,
Veil'd in a simple robe, their best attire,
Beyond the pomp of dress ; for loveliness
Needs not the foreign aid of ornament,
But is, when unadorn'd, adorn'd the most.
Thoughtless of beauty, she was Beauty's self,
Recluse amid the close-embowering woods.
As in the hollow breast of Appennine,
Beneath the shelter of encircling hills,
A myrtle rises, far from human eye,
And breathes its balmy fragrance o'er the wild ;
So flourish'd blooming, and unseen by all,
The sweet Lavinia ; till, at length, compell'd
By strong necessity's supreme command,
With smiling patience in her looks, she went
To glean Palemon's fields. The pride of swains
Palemon was, the generous, and the rich ;
Who led the rural life in all its joy
And elegance, such as Arcadian song
Transmits from ancient uncorrupted times,
When tyrant custom had not shackled man,
But free to follow Nature was the mode.
He then, his fancy with autumnal scenes
Amusing, chanced beside his reaper-train
To walk, when poor Lavinia drew his eye ;
Unconscious of her power, and turning quick
With unaffected blushes from his gaze :

He saw her charming, but he saw not half
The charms her downcast modesty conceal'd.
That very moment love and chaste desire
Sprung in his bosom, to himself unknown :
For still the world prevail'd and its dread laugh,
Which scarce the firm philosopher can scorn,
Should his heart own a gleaner in the field ;
And thus in secret to his soul he sigh'd :—

“What pity ! that so delicate a form,
By beauty kindled, where enlivening sense
And more than vulgar goodness seem to dwell,
Should be devoted to the rude embrace
Of some indecent clown ! she looks, methinks,
Of old Acasto's line ; and to my mind
Recals that patron of my happy life,
From whom my liberal fortune took its rise ;
Now to the dust gone down ; his houses, lands,
And once fair-spreading family, dissolved.
'Tis said that in some lone obscure retreat,
Urged by remembrance sad, and decent pride,
Far from those scenes which knew their better days,
His aged widow and his daughter live,
Whom yet my fruitless search could never find.
Romantic wish ! would this the daughter were !”

When, strict inquiring, from herself he found
She was the same, the daughter of his friend,
Of bountiful Acasto ; who can speak
The mingled passions that surprised his heart,
And through his nerves in shivering transport ran ?
Then blazed his smother'd flame, avow'd, and bold ;
And as he view'd her, ardent, o'er and o'er,
Love, gratitude, and pity wept at once.
Confused, and frighten'd at his sudden tears,
Her rising beauties flush'd a higher bloom,
As thus Palemon, passionate and just,
Pour'd out the pious rapture of his soul.

“And art thou then Acasto's dear remains ?
She whom my restless gratitude has sought
So long in vain ? O heavens ! the very same,
The soften'd image of my noble friend ;
Alive his every look, his every feature,
More elegantly touch'd. Sweeter than Spring !
Thou sole surviving blossom from the root
That nourish'd up my fortune ! Say, ah where,
In what sequester'd desert hast thou drawn
The kindest aspect of delighted Heaven ?
Into such beauty spread, and blown so fair ;
Though Poverty's cold wind, and crushing rain,
Beat keen and heavy on thy tender years ?
O let me now into a richer soil
Transplant thee safe ! where vernal suns and showers
Diffuse their warmest, largest influence ;
And of my garden be the pride and joy !
Ill it befits thee, oh it ill befits
Acasto's daughter, his whose open stores,
Though vast, were little to his ampler heart,
The father of a country, thus to pick
The very refuse of those harvest-fields
Which from his bounteous friendship I enjoy.
Then throw that shameful pittance from thy hand,
But ill applied to such a rugged task ;
The fields, the master, all, my fair, are thine ;
If to the various blessings which thy house
Has on me lavish'd thou wilt add that bliss,
That dearest bliss, the power of blessing thee !”

Here ceased the youth : yet still his speaking eye
Express'd the sacred triumph of his soul,
With conscious virtue, gratitude, and love,
Above the vulgar joy divinely raised.
Nor waited he reply. Won by the charm

Of goodness irresistible, and all
In sweet disorder lost, she blush'd consent.
The news immediate to her mother brought,
While, pierced with anxious thought, she pined
The lonely moments for Lavinia's fate ; [away
Amazed, and scarce believing what she heard,
Joy seized her wither'd veins, and one bright gleam
Of setting life shone on her evening-hours :
Not less enraptured than the happy pair,
Who flourish'd long in tender bliss, and rear'd
A numerous offspring, lovely like themselves,
And good, the grace of all the country round.

Defeating oft the labours of the year,
The sultry south collects a potent blast.
At first the groves are scarcely seen to stir
Their trembling tops, and a still murmur runs
Along the soft-inclining fields of corn.
But as the ærial tempest fuller swells,
And in one mighty stream, invisible,
Immense, the whole excited atmosphere
Impetuous rushes o'er the sounding world :
Strain'd to the root, the stooping forest pours
A rustling shower of yet untimely leaves.
High-beat, the circling mountains eddy in,
From the bare wild, the dissipated storm,
And send it in a torrent down the vale.
Exposed, and naked, to its utmost rage,
Through all the sea of harvest rolling round,
The billowy plain floats wide, nor can evade,
Though pliant to the blast, its seizing force ;
Or whirl'd in air, or into vacant chaff
Shook waste. And sometimes too a burst of rain,
Swept from the black horizon, broad, descends
In one continuous flood. Still over head
The mingling tempest waves its gloom, and still
The deluge deepens, till the fields around
Lie sunk, and flatted, in the sordid wave.
Sudden the ditches swell, the meadows swim.
Red, from the hills, innumerable streams
Tumultuous roar, and high above its banks
The river lift, before whose rushing tide
Herds, flocks, and harvests, cottages, and swains,
Roll mingled down ; all that the winds had spared
In one wild moment ruin'd ; the big hopes
And well-earn'd treasures of the painful year.
Fled to some eminence, the husbandman
Helpless beholds the miserable wreck
Driving along ; his drowning ox at once
Descending, with his labours scatter'd round,
He sees ; and instant o'er his shivering thought
Comes Winter unprovided, and a train
Of clamant children dear. Ye masters, then,
Be mindful of the rough laborious hand
That sinks you soft in elegance and ease ;
Be mindful of those limbs, in russet clad,
Whose toil to yours is warmth and graceful pride ;
And, oh ! be mindful of that sparing board
Which covers yours with luxury profuse,
Makes your glass sparkle, and your sense rejoice !
Nor cruelly demand what the deep rains
And all-involving winds have swept away.
Here the rude clamour of the sportsman's joy,
The gun fast-thundering, and the winded horn,
Would tempt the Muse to sing the rural game :
How, in his mid-career, the spaniel struck,
Stiff, by the tainted gale, with open nose,
Outstretch'd and finely sensible, draws full,
Fearful and cautious, on the latent prey ;
As in the sun the circling covey bask
Their varied plumes, and watchful every way,

Through the rough stubble turn the secret eye.
Caught in the meshy snare, in vain they beat
Their idle wings, entangled more and more :
Nor on the surges of the boundless air,
Though borne triumphant, are they safe ; the gun,
Glanced just and sudden, from the fowler's eye,
O'ertakes their sounding pinions ; and again,
Immediate, brings them from the towering wing,
Dead to the ground ; or drives them wide-dispersed,
Wounded, and wheeling various, down the wind.

These are not subjects for the peaceful Muse,
Nor will she stain with such her spotless song ;
Then most delighted, when she social sees
The whole mix'd animal creation round
Alive and happy. 'Tis not joy to her,
The falsely-cheerful barbarous game of death,
This rage of pleasure, which the restless youth
Awakes, impatient, with the gleaming morn ;
When beasts of prey retire, that all night long,
Urged by necessity, had ranged the dark,
As if their conscious ravage shunn'd the light,
Ashamed. Not so the steady tyrant man,
Who with the thoughtless insolence of power
Inflamed, beyond the most infuriate wrath
Of the worst monster that e'er roam'd the waste,
For sport alone pursues the cruel chase,
Amid the beamings of the gentle days.
Upbraids, ye ravening tribes, our wanton rage,
For hunger kindles you, and lawless want ;
But lavish fed, in Nature's bounty roll'd,
To joy at anguish, and delight in blood,
Is what your horrid bosoms never knew.

Poor is the triumph o'er the timid hare !
Scared from the corn, and now to some lone seat
Retired : the rushy fen ; the ragged furze,
Stretch'd o'er the stony heath ; the stubble chapt ;
The thistly lawn ; the thick-entangled broom ;
Of the same friendly hue, the wither'd fern ;
The fallow ground laid open to the sun,
Concoctive ; and the nodding sandy bank,
Hung o'er the mazes of the mountain brook.
Vain is her best precaution ; though she sits
Conceal'd, with folded ears ; unsleeping eyes,
By Nature raised to take the horizon in ;
And head couch'd close between her hairy feet,
In act to spring away. The scented dew
Betrays her early labyrinth ; and deep,
In scatter'd sullen openings, far behind,
With every breeze she hears the coming storm.
But nearer, and more frequent, as it loads
The sighing gale, she springs amazed, and all
The savage soul of game is up at once :
The pack full-opening, various ; the shrill horn
Resounded from the hills ; the neighing steed,
Wild for the chase ; and the loud hunter's shout ;
O'er a weak, harmless, flying creature, all
Mix'd in mad tumult, and discordant joy.

The stag too, singled from the herd where long
He ranged the branching monarch of the shades,
Before the tempest drives. At first, in speed
He, sprightly, puts his faith ; and, roused by fear,
Gives all his swift aerial soul to flight ;
Against the breeze he darts, that way the more
To leave the lessening murderous cry behind :
Deception short ! though fleetier than the winds
Blown o'er the keen-air'd mountain by the north,
He bursts the thickets, glances through the glades,
And plunges deep into the wildest wood ;
If slow, yet sure, adhesive to the track
Hot-steaming, up behind him come again

The inhuman rout, and from the shady depth
Expel him, circling through his every shift.
He sweeps the forest off ; and sobbing sees
The glades, mild opening to the golden day ;
Where, in kind contest, with his butting friends
He went to struggle, or his loves enjoy.
Oft in the full-descending flood he tries
To lose the scent, and lave his burning sides :
Oft seeks the herd ; the watchful herd, alarm'd,
With selfish care avoid a brother's woe.
What shall he do ? His once so vivid nerves,
So full of buoyant spirit, now no more
Inspire the course ; but fainting breathless toil,
Sick, seizes on his heart : he stands at bay,
And puts his last weak refuge in despair.
The big round tears run down his dappled face ;
He groans in anguish ; while the growling pack,
Blood-happy, hang at his fair jutting chest, [gore.
And mark his beauteous checker'd sides with
Of this enough. But if the sylvan youth,
Whose fervent blood boils into violence,
Must have the chase ; behold, despising flight,
The roused-up lion, resolute, and slow,
Advancing full on the pretended spear,
And coward band, that circling wheel aloof.
Slunk from the cavern, and the troubled wood,
See the grim wolf ; on him his shaggy foe
Vindictive fix, and let the ruffian die :
Or, growling horrid, as the brindled boar
Grins fell destruction, to the monster's heart
Let the dart lighten from the nervous arm.

These Britain knows not ; give, ye Britons, then
Your sportive fury, pitiless, to pour
Loose on the nightly robber of the fold ;
Him, from his craggy winding haunts unearth'd,
Let all the thunder of the chase pursue.
Throw the broad ditch behind you ; o'er the hedge
High bound, resistless ; nor the deep morass
Refuse, but through the shaking wilderness
Pick your nice way ; into the perilous flood
Bear fearless, of the raging instinct full ;
And, as you ride the torrent, to the banks
Your triumph sound sonorous, running round,
From rock to rock, in circling echoes toss'd ;
Then scale the mountains to their woody tops ;
Rush down the dangerous steep ; and o'er the lawn,
In fancy swallowing up the space between,
Pour all your speed into the rapid game.
For happy he ! who tops the wheeling chase ;
Has every maze evolved, and every guile
Disclosed ; who knows the merits of the pack ;
Who saw the villain seized, and dying hard,
Without complaint, though by a hundred mouths
Relentless torn. O glorious he, beyond
His daring peers ! when the retreating horn
Calls them to ghostly halls of grey renown,
With woodland honours graced ; the fox's fur
Depending decent from the roof ; and spread
Round the drear walls, with antic figures fierce,
The stag's large front : he then is loudest heard,
When the night staggers with severer toils,
With feasts Thessalian centaurs never knew,
And their repeated wonders shake the dome.

But first the fuel'd chimney blazes wide ;
The tankards foam ; and the strong table groans
Beneath the smoking sirloin, stretch'd immense
From side to side ; in which, with desperate knife,
They deep incision make, and talk the while
Of England's glory, ne'er to be defaced,
While hence they borrow vigour : or amain

Into the pasty plunged, at intervals,
 If stomach keen can intervals allow,
 Relating all the glories of the chase.
 Then sated Hunger bids his brother Thirst
 Produce the mighty bowl ; the mighty bowl,
 Swell'd high with fiery juice, steams liberal round
 A potent gale, delicious, as the breath
 Of Maia to the love-sick shepherdess,
 On violets diffused, while soft she hears
 Her panting shepherd stealing to her arms.
 Nor wanting is the brown October, drawn,
 Mature and perfect, from his dark retreat
 Of thirty years ; and now his honest front
 Flames in the light refulgent, not afraid
 Even with the vineyard's best produce to vie.
 To cheat the thirsty moments, Whist a while
 Walks his dull round beneath a cloud of smoke,
 Wreathed, fragrant, from the pipe ; or the quick
 In thunder leaping from the box, awake [dice,
 The sounding gammon ; while romp-loving miss
 Is haul'd about, in gallantry robust.

At last, these puling idlenesses laid
 Aside, frequent and full, the dry divan
 Close in firm circle ; and set, ardent, in
 For serious drinking. Nor evasion sly,
 Nor sober shift, is to the puking wretch
 Indulged apart ; but earnest, brimming bowls
 Lave every soul, the table floating round,
 And pavement, faithless to the fuddled foot.
 Thus as they swim in mutual swill, the talk,
 Vociferous at once from twenty tongues,
 Reels fast from theme to theme ; from horses,
 To church or mistress, politics or ghost, [hounds,
 In endless mazes, intricate, perplex'd.
 Meantime, with sudden interruption, loud,
 The impatient catch bursts from the joyous heart :
 That moment touch'd is every kindred soul ;
 And, opening in a full-mouth'd cry of joy,
 The laugh, the slap, the jocular curse go round ;
 While, from their slumbers shook, the kennel'd
 Mix in the music of the day again. [hounds
 As when the tempest, that has vex'd the deep
 The dark night long, with fainter murmurs falls,
 So gradual sinks their mirth. Their feeble tongues,
 Unable to take up the cumbrous word,
 Lie quite dissolved. Before their maudlin eyes,
 Seen dim and blue, the double tapers dance,
 Like the sun wading through the misty sky.
 Then, sliding soft, they drop. Confused above,
 Glasses and bottles, pipes and gazetteers,
 As if the table even itself was drunk,
 Lie a wet broken scene ; and wide, below,
 Is heap'd the social slaughter : where astride
 The lubber Power in filthy triumph sits,
 Slumbrous, inclining still from side to side,
 And steepens them drench'd in potent sleep till morn.
 Perhaps some doctor, of tremendous paunch,
 Awful and deep, a black abyss of drink,
 Outlives them all ; and from his buried flock
 Retiring, full of rumination sad,
 Laments the weakness of these latter times.

But if the rougher sex by this fierce sport
 Is hurried wild, let not such horrid joy
 E'er stain the bosom of the British fair.
 Far be the spirit of the chase from them !
 Uncomely courage, unbecoming skill ;
 To spring the fence, to rein the prancing steed ;
 The cap, the whip, the masculine attire,
 In which they roughen to the sense, and all
 The winning softness of their sex is lost.

In them 'tis graceful to dissolve at woe ;
 With every motion, every word, to wave
 Quick o'er the kindling cheek the ready blush ;
 And from the smallest violence to shrink
 Unequal, then the loveliest in their fears ;
 And by this silent adulation, soft,
 To their protection more engaging man.
 O may their eyes no miserable sight,
 Save weeping lovers, see ; a nobler game,
 Through love's enchanting wiles pursued, yet fled,
 In chase ambiguous. May their tender limbs
 Float in the loose simplicity of dress !
 And, fashion'd all to harmony, alone
 Know they to seize the captivated soul,
 In rapture warbled from love-breathing lips ;
 To teach the lute to languish ; with smooth step,
 Disclosing motion in its every charm,
 To swim along, and swell the mazy dance ;
 To train the foliage o'er the snowy lawn ;
 To guide the pencil, turn the tuneful page ;
 To lend new flavour to the fruitful year,
 And heighten Nature's dainties ; in their race
 To rear their graces into second life ;
 To give society its highest taste ;
 Well-order'd home man's best delight to make ;
 And by submissive wisdom, modest skill,
 With every gentle care-eluding art,
 To raise the virtues, animate the bliss,
 And sweeten all the toils of human life :
 This be the female dignity and praise.

Ye swains, now hasten to the hazel bank,
 Where, down yon dale, the wildly-winding brook
 Falls hoarse from steep to steep. In close array,
 Fit for the thickets and the tangling shrub,
 Ye virgins, come. For you their latest song
 The woodlands raise ; the clustering nuts for you
 The lover finds amid the secret shade ;
 And, where they burnish on the topmost bough,
 With active vigour crushes down the tree ;
 Or shakes them ripe from the resigning husk,
 A glossy shower, and of an ardent brown,
 As are the ringlets of Melinda's hair :
 Melinda ! form'd with every grace complete ;
 Yet these neglecting, above beauty wise,
 And far transcending such a vulgar praise.

Hence from the busy joy-resounding fields,
 In cheerful error, let us tread the maze
 Of Autumn, unconfined ; and taste, revived,
 The breath of orchard big with bending fruit ;
 Obedient to the breeze and beating ray,
 From the deep-loaded bough a mellow shower
 Incessant melts away. The juicy pear
 Lies, in a soft profusion scatter'd round.
 A various sweetness swells the gentle race,
 By Nature's all-refining hand prepared ;
 Of temper'd sun, and water, earth, and air,
 In ever-changing composition mix'd.
 Such, falling frequent through the chiller night,
 The fragrant stores, the wide-projected heaps
 Of apples, which the lusty-handed Year,
 Innumerable, o'er the blushing orchard shakes.
 A various spirit, fresh, delicious, keen,
 Dwells in their gelid pores ; and, active, points
 The piercing cider for the thirsty tongue :
 Thy native theme, and boon inspirer too,
 Philips, Pomona's bard, the second thou
 Who nobly durst, in rhyme-unfetter'd verse,
 With British freedom sing the British song :
 How, from Silurian vats, high-sparkling wines
 Foam in transparent floods ; some strong to cheer

The wintry revels of the labouring hind ;
And tasteful some, to cool the summer hours.

In this glad season, while his sweetest beams
The sun sheds equal o'er the meekn'd day,
Oh lose me in the green delightful walks
Of, Dodington, thy seat, serene and plain ;
Where simple Nature reigns ; and every view,
Diffusive, spreads the pure Dorsetian downs,
In boundless prospect ; yonder shagg'd with wood,
Here rich with harvest, and there white with flocks ;
Meantime the grandeur of thy lofty dome,
Far-splendid, seizes on the ravish'd eye.
New beauties rise with each revolving day ;
New columns swell ; and still the fresh Spring finds
New plants to quicken, and new groves to green.
Full of thy genius all ! the Muses' seat :
Where in the secret bower, and winding walk,
For virtuous Young and thee they twine the bay.
Here wandering oft, fired with the restless thirst
Of thy applause, I solitary court
The inspiring breeze, and meditate the book
Of Nature, ever open ; aiming thence,
Warm from the heart, to learn the moral song.
Here, as I steal along the sunny wall
Where Autumn basks, with fruit empurpled deep,
My pleasing theme continual prompts my thought :
Presents the downy peach, the shining plum,
The ruddy fragrant nectarine, and, dark
Beneath his ample leaf, the luscious fig.
The vine too here her curling tendrils shoots,
Hangs out her clusters, glowing to the south,
And scarcely wishes for a warmer sky.

' Turn we a moment Fancy's rapid flight
To vigorous soils, and climes of fair extent ;
Where, by the potent sun elated high,
The vineyard swells refulgent on the day,
Spreads o'er the vale, or up the mountain climbs,
Profuse, and drinks amid the sunny rocks,
From cliff to cliff increased, the heighten'd blaze.
Low bend the weighty boughs. The clusters clear,
Half through the foliage seen, or ardent flame,
Or shine transparent ; while perfection breathes
White o'er the turgent film the living dew.
As thus they brighten with exalted juice,
Touch'd into flavour by the mingling ray ;
The rural youth and virgins o'er the field,
Each fond for each to cull the autumnal prime,
Exulting rove, and speak the vintage nigh.
Then comes the crushing swain ; the country floats,
And foams unbounded with the mashy flood ;
That by degrees fermented, and refined,
Round the raised nations pours the cup of joy ;
The claret smooth, red as the lip we press
In sparkling fancy, while we drain the bowl ;
The mellow-tasted Burgundy ; and, quick
As is the wit it gives, the gay Champagne.

Now, by the cool declining year condensed,
Descend the copious exhalations, check'd
As up the middle sky unseen they stole,
And roll the doubling fogs around the hill.
No more the mountain, horrid, vast, sublime,
Which pours a sweep of rivers from its sides,
And high between contending kingdoms rears
The rocky long division, fills the view
With great variety ; but, in a night
Of gathering vapour, from the baffled sense
Sinks dark and dreary. Thence expanding far,
The huge dusk, gradual, swallows up the plain :
Vanish the woods ; the dim-seen river seems
Sullen, and slow, to roll the misty wave.

Even in the height of noon oppress'd, the sun
Sheds weak, and blunt, his wide-refracted ray :
Whence glaring oft, with many a broaden'd orb,
He frights the nations. Indistinct on earth,
Seen through the turbid air, beyond the life
Objects appear ; and, wilder'd, o'er the waste
The shepherd stalks gigantic. Till at last
Wreathed dun around, in deeper circles still
Successive closing, sits the general fog
Unbounded o'er the world ; and, mingling thick,
A formless grey confusion covers all.
As when of old (so sung the Hebrew Bard)
Light, uncollected, through the chaos urged
Its infant way ; nor Order yet had drawn
His lovely train from out the dubious gloom.

These roving mists, that constant now begin
To smoke along the hilly country, these,
With weightier rains, and melted Alpine snows,
The mountain-cisterns fill, those ample stores
Of water, scoop'd among the hollow rocks ;
Whence gush the streams, the ceaseless fountains
play,

And their unfauling wealth the rivers draw.
Some sages say, that, where the numerous wave
For ever lashes the resounding shore,
Drill'd through the sandy stratum, every way,
The waters with the sandy stratum rise ;
Amid whose angles, infinitely strain'd,
They joyful leave their jaggy salts behind,
And clear and sweeten as they soak along.
Nor stops the restless fluid, mounting still,
Though oft amidst the irriguous vale it springs ;
But to the mountain courted by the sand,
That leads it dorkling on in faithful maze,
Far from the parent-main, it boils again
Fresh into day, and all the glittering hill
Is bright with spouting rills. But hence this vain
Amusive dream ! why should the waters love
To take so far a journey to the hills,
When the sweet valleys offer to their toil
Inviting quiet, and a nearer bed ?
Or if, by blind ambition led astray,
They must aspire, why should they sudden stop
Among the broken mountain's rushy dells,
And, ere they gain its highest peak, desert
The attractive sand that charm'd their course so
Besides, the hard agglomerating salts, [long ?
The spoil of ages, would impervious choke
Their secret channels ; or, by slow degrees,
High as the hills protrude the swelling vales :
Old Ocean too, suck'd through the porous globe,
Had long ere now forsook his horrid bed,
And brought Deucalion's watery times again.

Say, then, where lurk the vast eternal springs,
That, like creating Nature, lie conceal'd
From mortal eye, yet with their lavish stores
Refresh the globe, and all its joyous tribes !
O thou pervading Genius, given to man,
To trace the secrets of the dark abyss,
O lay the mountains bare ! and wide display
Their hidden structure to the astonish'd view !
Strip from the branching Alps their piny load ;
The huge incumbrance of horrid woods
From Asian Taurus, from Imaus stretch'd
Athwart the roving Tartar's sullen bounds !
Give opening Hemus to my searching eye,
And high Olympus pouring many a stream ;
O from the sounding summits of the north,
The Dofrine Hills, through Scandinavia roll'd
To farthest Lapland and the frozen main ;

From lofty Caucasus, far seen by those
 Who in the Caspian and black Euxine toil ;
 From cold Rhiphæan rocks, which the wild Russ
 Believes the stony girdle of the world* ;
 And all the dreadful mountains, wrapt in storm,
 Whence wide Siberia draws her lonely floods ;
 O sweep the eternal snows ! Hung o'er the deep,
 That ever works beneath his sounding base,
 Bid Atlas, propping heaven, as poets feign,
 His subterranean wonders spread ! Unveil
 The miny caverns, blazing on the day,
 Of Abyssinia's cloud-compelling cliffs,
 And of the bending Mountains of the Moon† !
 O'ertopping all these giant-sons of earth,
 Let the dire Andes, from the radiant line
 Stretch'd to the stormy seas that thunder round
 The southern pole, their hideous deeps unfold !

Amazing scene ! Behold ! the glooms disclose,
 I see the rivers in their infant beds !
 Deep, deep, I hear them, labouring to get free ;
 I see the leaning strata, artful ranged ;
 The gaping fissures to receive the rains,
 The melting snows, and ever-dripping fogs.
 Strow'd bibulous above I see the sands,
 The pebbly gravel next, the layers then
 Of mingled moulds, of more retentive earths,
 The gutter'd rocks and mazy-running clefts ;
 That, while the stealing moisture they transmit,
 Retard its motion, and forbid its waste.
 Beneath the incessant weeping of these drains,
 I see the rocky siphons stretch'd immense,
 The mighty reservoirs, of harden'd chalk,
 Or stiff-compacted clay, capacious form'd.
 O'erflowing thence, the congregated stores,
 The crystal treasures of the liquid world,
 Through the stirr'd sands a bubbling passage burst ;
 And welling out, around the middle steep,
 Or from the bottoms of the bosom'd hills,
 In pure effusion flow. United, thus,
 The exhaling sun, the vapour-burden'd air,
 The gelid mountains, that to rain condensed
 These vapours in continual current draw,
 And send them, o'er the fair-divided earth,
 In bounteous rivers to the deep again,
 A social commerce hold, and firm support
 The full-adjusted harmony of things.

When Autumn scatters his departing gleams,
 Warn'd of approaching Winter, gather'd, play
 The swallow-people ; and toss'd wide around,
 O'er the calm sky, in convulsion swift,
 The feather'd eddy floats ; rejoicing once,
 Ere to their wintry slumbers they retire ;
 In clusters clung, beneath the mouldering bank,
 And where, unpierced by frost, the cavern sweats.
 Or rather into warmer climes convey'd
 With other kindred birds of season, there
 They twitter cheerful, till the vernal months
 Invite them welcome back : for, thronging, now
 Innumerable wings are in commotion all.

Where the Rhine loses his majestic force
 In Belgian plains, won from the raging deep,
 By diligence amazing, and the strong
 Unconquerable hand of Liberty,
 The stork-assembly meets ; for many a day,
 Consulting deep, and various, ere they take

* The Muscovites call the Rhiphæan Mountains *Weliki Camenypois*, that is, the *Great Stony Girdle* ; because they suppose them to encompass the whole earth.

† A range of mountains in Africa, that surround almost all Monomotapa.

Their arduous voyage through the liquid sky :
 And now their route design'd, their leaders chose,
 Their tribes adjusted, clean'd their vigorous wings ;
 And many a circle, many a short essay,
 Wheel'd round and round, in congregation full,
 The figured flight ascends ; and, riding high
 The aerial billows, mixes with the clouds.

Or where the Northern Ocean, in vast whirls,
 Boils round the naked melancholy isles
 Of farthest Thule, and the Atlantic surge
 Pours in among the stormy Hebrides ;
 Who can recount what transmigrations there
 Are annual made ? what nations come and go ?
 And how the living clouds on clouds arise ?
 Infinite wings ! till all the plume-dark air
 And rude-resounding shore are one wild cry.

Here the plain harmless native his small flock,
 And herd diminutive of many hues,
 Tends on the little island's verdant swell,
 The shepherd's sea-girt reign ; or to the rocks
 Dire-clinging, gathers his ovarious food ;
 Or sweeps the fishy shore ; or treasures up
 The plumage, rising full, to form the bed
 Of luxury. And here awhile the Muse,
 High hovering o'er the broad cerulean scene,
 Sees Caledonia, in romantic view :
 Her airy mountains, from the waving main,
 Invested with a keen diffusive sky,
 Breathing the soul acute ; her forests large,
 Incult, robust, and tall, by Nature's hand
 Planted of old ; her azure lakes between,
 Pour'd out extensive, and of watery wealth
 Full ; winding deep, and green, her fertile vales ;
 With many a cool translucent brimming flood
 Wash'd lovely, from the Tweed (pure parent stream,
 Whose pastoral banks first heard my Doric reed,
 With, sylvan Jed, thy tributary brook)
 To where the north-inflated tempest foams
 O'er Orca's or Betubium's highest peak :
 Nurse of a people, in Misfortune's school
 Train'd up to hardy deeds ; soon visited
 By Learning, when before the Gothic rage
 She took her western flight. A manly race,
 Of unsubmitting spirit, wise, and brave ;
 Who still through bleeding ages struggled hard
 (As well unhappy Wallace can attest,
 Great patriot hero ! ill-requited chief !)
 To hold a generous undiminish'd state ;
 Too much in vain ! Hence of unequal bounds
 Impatient, and by tempting glory borne
 O'er every land, for every land their life
 Has flow'd profuse, their piercing genius plann'd,
 And swell'd the pomp of peace their faithful toil.
 As from their own clear north, in radiant streams,
 Bright over Europe bursts the Boreal morn.

Oh ! is there not some patriot, in whose power
 That best, that god-like luxury is placed,
 Of blessing thousands, thousands yet unborn,
 Through late posterity ? some large of soul,
 To cheer dejected industry ? to give
 A double harvest to the pining swain,
 And teach the labouring hind the sweets of toil ?
 How, by the finest art, the native robe
 To weave ; how, white as hyperborean snow,
 To form the lucid lawn ; with venturous oar
 How to dash wide the billow ; nor look on,
 Shamefully passive, while Batavian fleets
 Defraud us of the glittering finny swarms,
 That heave our friths, and crowd upon our shores ;
 How all-enlivening trade to rouse, and wing

The prosperous sail, from every growing port,
Uninjured, round the sea-encircled globe ;
And thus, in soul united as in name,
Bid Britain reign the mistress of the deep ?

Yes, there are such. And, full on thee, Argyle,
Her hope, her stay, her darling, and her boast,
From her first patriots and her heroes sprung,
Thy fond imploring country turns her eye ;
In thee, with all a mother's triumph, sees
Her every virtue, every grace combined,
Her genius, wisdom, her engaging turn,
Her pride of honour, and her courage tried,
Calm, and intrepid in the very throat
Of sulphurous war, on Tenier's dreadful field.
Nor less the palm of peace inwreathes thy brow :
For, powerful as thy sword, from thy rich tongue
Persuasion flows, and wins the high debate ;
While mix'd in thee combine the charm of youth,
The force of manhood, and the depth of age.
Thee, Forbes, too, whom every worth attends,
As truth sincere, as weeping friendship kind,
Thee, truly generous, and in silence great,
Thy country feels through her reviving arts
Plann'd by thy wisdom, by thy soul inform'd ;
And seldom has she known a friend like thee.

But see the fading many-colour'd woods,
Shade deepening over shade, the country round
Imbrown, a crowded umbrage, dusk, and dun,
Of every hue, from wan declining green
To sooty dark. These now the lonesome Muse,
Low-whispering, lead into their leaf-strown walks,
And give the Season in its latest view.

Meantime, light shadowing all, a sober calm
Fleeces unbounded ether ; whose least wave
Stands tremulous, uncertain where to turn
The gentle current ; while, illumined wide,
The dewy-skirted clouds imbibe the sun,
And through their lucid veil his soften'd force
Shed o'er the peaceful world. Then is the time,
For those whom Wisdom and whom Nature charm,
To steal themselves from the degenerate crowd,
And soar above this little scene of things ;
To tread low-thoughted Vice beneath their feet ;
To soothe the throbbing passions into peace ;
And woo lone Quiet in her silent walks.

Thus solitary, and in pensive guise,
Oft let me wander o'er the russet mead,
And through the sadden'd grove, where scarce is
heard

One dying strain, to cheer the woodman's toil.
Haply some widow'd songster pours his plaint,
Far, in faint warblings, through the tawny copse ;
While congregated thrushes, linnets, larks,
And each wild throat, whose artless strains so late
Swell'd all the music of the swarming shades,
Robb'd of their tuneful souls, now shivering sit
On the dead tree, a dull despondent flock ;
With not a brightness waving o'er their plumes,
And nought save chattering discord in their note.
O ! let not, aim'd from some inhuman eye,
The gun the music of the coming year
Destroy ; and harmless, unsuspecting harm,
Lay the weak tribes a miserable prey,
In mingled murder, fluttering on the ground !

The pale descending year, yet pleasing still,
A gentler mood inspires ; for now the leaf
Incessant rustles from the mournful grove ;
Oft startling such as, studious, walk below ;
And slowly circles through the waving air.
But should a quicker breeze amid the boughs

Sob, o'er the sky the leafy deluge streams ;
Till choked and matted with the dreary shower,
The forest walks, at every rising gale,
Roll wide the wither'd waste, and whistle bleak.
Fled is the blasted verdure of the fields ;
And, shrunk into their beds, the flowery race
Their sunny robes resign. E'en what remain'd
Of stronger fruits falls from the naked tree ;
And woods, fields, gardens, orchards, all around
The desolated prospect thrills the soul.

He comes ! he comes ! in every breeze the Power
Of Philosophic Melancholy comes !
His near approach the sudden starting tear,
The glowing cheek, the mild dejected air,
The soften'd feature, and the beating heart,
Pierced deep with many a virtuous pang, declare.
O'er all the soul his sacred influence breathes !
Inflames imagination ; through the breast
Infuses every tenderness ; and far
Beyond dim earth exalts the swelling thought.
Ten thousand thousand fleet ideas, such
As never mingled with the vulgar dream,
Crowd fast into the mind's creative eye.
As fast the correspondent passions rise,
As varied, and as high : Devotion raised
To rapture, and divine astonishment ;
The love of Nature unconfin'd, and, chief,
Of human race ; the large ambitious wish
To make them blest ; the sigh for suffering worth
Lost in obscurity ; the noble scorn
Of tyrant-pride ; the fearless great resolve ;
The wonder which the dying patriot draws,
Inspiring glory through remotest time ;
The awakened throb for virtue, and for fame ;
The sympathies of love, and friendship dear ;
With all the social offspring of the heart.

Oh ! bear me then to vast embowering shades,
To twilight groves, and visionary vales ;
To weeping grottoes, and prophetic glooms ;
Where angel forms athwart the solemn dusk
Tremendous sweep, or seem to sweep along ;
And voices more than human, through the void
Deep-sounding, seize the enthusiastic ear !

Or is this gloom too much ? Then lead, ye powers,
That o'er the garden and the rural seat
Preside, which shining through the cheerful land
In countless numbers blest Britannia sees ;
O, lead me to the wide-extended walks,
The fair majestic paradise of Stowe* !
Not Persian Cyrus on Ionia's shore
E'er saw such sylvan scenes ; such various art
By genius fired, such ardent genius tamed
By cool judicious art ; that, in the strife,
All beauteous Nature fears to be outdone.
And there, O Pitt, thy country's early boast,
There let me sit beneath the shelter'd slopes,
Or in that Temple † where, in future times,
Thou well shalt merit a distinguish'd name ;
And, with thy converse blest, catch the last smiles
Of Autumn beaming o'er the yellow woods.
While there with thee the enchanted round I walk,
The regulated wild, gay Fancy then
Will tread in thought the groves of Attic land ;
Will from thy standard taste refine her own,
Correct thy pencil to the purest truth
Of Nature, or, the unimpassion'd shades
Forsaking, raise it to the human mind.
Or if hereafter she, with juster hand,

* The seat of Lord Cobham.

† The Temple of Virtue in Stowe Gardens.

Shall draw the tragic scene, instruct her, thou,
To mark the varied movements of the heart,
What every decent character requires,
And every passion speaks : O ! through her strain
Breathe thy pathetic eloquence, that moulds
The attentive senate, charms, persuades, exalts,
Of honest Zeal the indignant lightning throws,
And shakes Corruption on her venal throne !
While thus we talk, and through Elysian vales
Delighted rove, perhaps a sigh escapes :
What pity, Cobham, thou thy verdant files
Of order'd trees shouldst here inglorious range,
Instead of squadrons flaming o'er the field,
And long embattled hosts ! when the proud foe,
The faithless vain disturber of mankind,
Insulting Gaul has roused the world to war ;
When keen, once more, within their bounds to press
Those polish'd robbers, those ambitious slaves,
The British youth would hail thy wise command,
Thy temper'd ardour and thy veteran skill.

The western sun withdraws the shorten'd day ;
And humid Evening, gliding o'er the sky,
In her chill progress, to the ground condensed
The vapours throws. Where creeping waters ooze,
Where marshes stagnate, and where rivers wind,
Cluster the rolling fogs, and swim along
The dusky-mantled lawn. Meanwhile the Moon,
Full-orb'd, and breaking through the scatter'd
clouds,

Shows her broad visage in the crimson'd east.
Turn'd to the sun direct, her spotted disk,
Where mountains rise, umbrageous dales descend,
And caverns deep, as optic tube describes,
A smaller earth, gives us his blaze again,
Void of its flame, and sheds a softer day.
Now through the passing cloud she seems to stoop,
Now up the pure cerulean rides sublime.
Wide the pale deluge floats, and streaming mild
O'er the skyed mountain to the shadowy vale,
While rocks and floods reflect the quivering gleam,
The whole air whitens with a boundless tide
Of silver radiance, trembling round the world.

But when half blotted from the sky her light,
Fainting, permits the starry fires to burn
With keener lustre through the depth of heaven ;
Or near extinct her deaden'd orb appears,
And scarce appears, of sickly beamless white ;
Oft in this season, silent from the north
A blaze of meteors shoots : ensweeping first
The lower skies, they all at once converge
High to the crown of heaven, and all at once
Relapsing quick, as quickly reascend,
And mix, and thwart, extinguish and renew,
All ether coursing in a maze of light.
From look to look, contagious through the crowd,
The panic runs, and into wondrous shapes
The appearance throws : armies in meet array,
Throng'd with aerial spears, and steeds of fire ;
Till, the long lines of full-extended war
In bleeding light commix'd, the sanguine flood
Rolls a broad slaughter o'er the plains of heaven.
As thus they scan the visionary scene,
On all sides swells the superstitious din,
Incontinent ; and busy Frenzy talks
Of blood and battle ; cities overturn'd,
And late at night in swallowing earthquake sunk,
Or hideous wrapt in fierce ascending flame ;
Of sorrow famine, inundation, storm ;
Of pestilence, and every great distress ;
Empires subvers'd, when ruling fate has struck

The unalterable hour : even Nature's self
Is deem'd to totter on the brink of time.
Not so the man of philosophic eye,
And inspect sage ; the waving brightness he
Curious surveys, inquisitive to know
The causes, and materials, yet unfix'd,
Of this appearance beautiful and new.

Now black, and deep, the night begins to fall,
A shade immense ! sunk in the quenching gloom,
Magnificent and vast, are heaven and earth.
Order confounded lies ; all beauty void ;
Distinction lost ; and gay variety
One universal blot : such the fair power
Of light, to kindle and create the whole.
Drear is the state of the benighted wretch,
Who then, bewilder'd, wanders through the dark,
Full of pale fancies, and chimeras huge ;
Nor visited by one directive ray,
From cottage streaming, or from airy hall.
Perhaps impatient as he stumbles on,
Struck from the root of slimy rushes, blue,
The wildfire scatters round, or gather'd trails
A length of flame deceitful o'er the moss :
Whither decoy'd by the fantastic blaze,
Now lost and now renew'd, he sinks absorb'd,
Rider and horse, amid the miry gulf :
While still, from day to day, his pining wife
And plaintive children his return await,
In wild conjecture lost. At other times,
Sent by the better Genius of the night,
Innoxious, gleaming on the horse's mane,
The meteor sits ; and shows the narrow path,
That winding leads through pits of death, or else
Instructs him how to take the dangerous ford.

The lengthen'd night elapsed, the morning shines
Serene, in all her dewy beauty bright,
Unfolding fair the last autumnal day.
And now the mounting sun dispels the fog ;
The rigid hoar-frost melts before his beam ;
And hung on every spray, on every blade
Of grass, the myriad dew-drops twinkle round.

Al! see where, robb'd and murder'd in that pit
Lies the still-heaving hive ! at evening snatch'd
Beneath the cloud of guilt-concealing night,
And fix'd o'er sulphur ; while, not dreaming ill,
The happy people, in their waxen cells,
Sat tending public cares, and planning schemes
Of temperance, for winter poor ; rejoiced
To mark, full flowing round, their copious stores.
Sudden the dark oppressive steam ascends ;
And, used to milder scents, the tender race,
By thousands, tumble from their honey'd domes,
Convolved, and agonizing in the dust.
And was it then for this you roam'd the Spring.
Intent from flower to flower ? for this you toil'd
Ceaseless the burning Summer-heats away ?
For this in Autumn search'd the blooming waste,
Nor lost one sunny gleam ? for this sad fate ?
O man ! tyrannic lord ! how long, how long
Shall prostrate Nature groan beneath your rage,
Awaiting renovation ?—When obliged,
Must you destroy ? of their ambrosial food
Can you not borrow ; and, in just return,
Afford them shelter from the wintry winds ?
Or, as the sharp year pinches, with their own
Again regale them on some smiling day ?
See where the stony bottom of their town
Looks desolate, and wild ; with here and there
A helpless number, who the ruin'd state
Survive, lamenting weak, cast out to death.

Thus a proud city, populous and rich,
Full of the works of peace, and high in joy,
At theatre or feast, or sunk in sleep,
(As late, Palermo, was thy fate) is seized
By some dread earthquake, and convulsive hurl'd
Sheer from the black foundation, stench-involved,
Into a gulf of blue sulphureous flame.

Hence every harsher sight ! for now the day,
O'er heaven and earth diffused, grows warm, and
high ;

Infinite splendour ! wide investing all.
How still the breeze ! save what the filmy thread
Of dew evaporate brushes from the plain.
How clear the cloudless sky ! how deeply tinged
With a peculiar blue ! the ethereal arch
How swell'd immense ! amid whose azure throned,
The radiant sun how gay ! how calm below
The gilded earth ! the harvest-treasures all
Now gather'd in, beyond the rage of storms,
Sure to the swain ; the circling fence shut up ;
And instant Winter's utmost rage defied ;
While, loose to festive joy, the country round
Laughs with the loud sincerity of mirth, [youth,
Shook to the wind their cares. The toil-strung
By the quick sense of music taught alone,
Leaps wildly graceful in the lively dance.
Her every charm abroad, the village-toast,
Young, buxom, warm, in native beauty rich,
Darts not unmeaning looks ; and, where her eye
Points an approving smile, with double force
The cudgel rattles, and the wrestler twines.
Age too shines out ; and, garrulous, recounts
The feats of youth. Thus they rejoice ; nor think
That, with to-morrow's sun, their annual toil
Begins again the never-ceasing round.

Oh, knew he but his happiness, of men
The happiest he ! who far from public rage,
Deep in the vale, with a choice few retired,
Drinks the pure pleasures of the rural life.
What though the dome be wanting, whose proud
gate,

Each morning, vomits out the sneaking crowd
Of flatterers false, and in their turn abused ?
Vile intercourse ! What though the glittering robe,
Of every hue reflected light can give,
Or floating loose, or stiff with mazy gold,
The pride and gaze of fools, oppress him not ?
What though, from utmost land and sea purvey'd,
For him each rarer tributary life
Bleeds not, and his insatiate table heaps
With luxury and death ? What though his bowl
Flames not with costly juice ; nor sunk in beds,
Oft of gay care, he tosses out the night,
Or melts the thoughtless hours in idle state ?
What though he knows not those fantastic joys
That still amuse the wanton, still deceive ;
A face of pleasure, but a heart of pain ;
Their hollow moments undelightful all ?
Sure peace is his ; a solid life, estranged
To disappointment and fallacious hope :
Rich in content, in Nature's bounty rich,
In herbs and fruits ; whatever greens the Spring,
When heaven descends in showers ; or bends the
bough,

When Summer reddens, and when Autumn beams ;
Or in the wintry glebe whatever lies
Conceal'd, and fattens with the richest sap :
These are not wanting ; nor the milky dove,
Luxuriant, spread o'er all the lowing vale ;
Nor bleating mountains ; nor the chide of streams,

And hum of bees, inviting sleep sincere
Into the guiltless breast, beneath the shade,
Or thrown at large amid the fragrant hay ;
Nor aught besides of prospect, grove, or song,
Dim grottoes, gleaming lakes, and fountain clear.
Here too dwells simple Truth ; plain Innocence ;
Unsullied Beauty ; sound unbroken Youth,
Patient of labour, with a little pleased ;
Health ever blooming ; unambitious Toil ;
Calm Contemplation, and poetic Ease.

Let others brave the flood in quest of gain,
And beat, for joyless months, the gloomy wave.
Let such as deem it glory to destroy,
Rush into blood, the sack of cities seek ;
Unpierced, exulting in the widow's wail,
The virgin's shriek, and infant's trembling cry.
Let some, far distant from their native soil,
Urged or by want or harden'd avarice,
Find other lands beneath another sun.
Let this through cities work his eager way,
By legal outrage and establish'd guile,
The social sense extinct ; and that ferment
Mad into tumult the seditious herd,
Or melt them down to slavery. Let these
Ensnare the wretched in the toils of law,
Fomenting discord, and perplexing right,
An iron race ! and those of fairer front,
But equal inhumanity, in courts,
Delusive pomp and dark cabals, delight ;
Wreath the deep bow, diffuse the lying smile,
And tread the weary labyrinth of state.
While he, from all the stormy passions free
That restless men involve, hears, and but hears,
At distance safe, the human tempest roar,
Wrapp'd close in conscious peace. The fall of kings,
The rage of nations, and the crush of states,
Move not the man, who, from the world escaped,
In still retreats and flowery solitudes,
To Nature's voice attends, from month to month,
And day to day, through the revolving year ;
Admiring, sees her in her every shape ;
Feels all her sweet emotions at his heart ;
Takes what she liberal gives, nor thinks of more.
He, when young Spring protrudes the bursting
germs,

Marks the first bud, and sucks the healthful gale
Into his freshen'd soul ; her genial hours
He full enjoys ; and not a beauty blows,
And not an opening blossom breathes in vain.
In Summer he, beneath the living shade,
Such as o'er frigid Tempe wont to wave,
Or Hemus cool, reads what the Muse, of these,
Perhaps, has in immortal numbers sung ;
Or, what she dictates writes ; and, oft an eye
Shot round, rejoices in the vigorous year.

When Autumn's yellow lustre gilds the world,
And tempts the sickled swain into the field,
Seized by the general joy, his heart distends
With gentle throes ; and, through the tepid gleams
Deep musing, then he best exerts his song.
Even Winter wild to him is full of bliss.
The mighty tempest, and the hoary waste,
Abrupt and deep, stretch'd o'er the buried earth,
Awake to solemn thought. At night the skies,
Disclosed, and kindled, by refining frost,
Pour every lustre on the exalted eye.
A friend, a book, the stealing hours secure,
And mark them down for wisdom. With swift
wing
O'er land and sea imagination roams ;

Or truth, divinely breaking on his mind,
 Elates his being, and unfolds his powers ;
 Or in his breast heroic virtue burns.
 The touch of kindred too and love he feels ;
 The modest eye, whose beams on his alone
 Ecstatic shine ; the little strong embrace
 Of prattling children, twined around his neck,
 And emulous to please him, calling forth
 The fond parental soul. Nor purpose gay,
 Amusement, dance, or song, he sternly scorns ;
 For happiness and true philosophy
 Are of the social, still, and smiling kind.
 This is the life which those who fret in guilt,
 And guilty cities, never knew ; the life
 Led by primeval ages, uncorrupt,
 When angels dwelt, and God himself, with man !
 Oh Nature ! all-sufficient ! over all !
 Enrich me with the knowledge of thy works :
 Snatch me to heaven ; thy rolling wonders there,

World beyond world, in infinite extent,
 Profusely scatter'd o'er the blue immense,
 Show me ; their motions, periods, and their laws,
 Give me to scan ; through the disclosing deep
 Light my blind way : the mineral strata there ;
 Thrust blooming thence, the vegetable world ;
 O'er that the rising system, more complex,
 Of animals ; and, higher still, the mind,
 The varied scene of quick-compounded thought,
 And where the mixing passions endless shift ;
 These ever open to my ravish'd eye ;
 A search, the flight of time can ne'er exhaust !
 But if to that unequal,—if the blood,
 In sluggish streams about my heart, forbid
 That best ambition,—under closing shades,
 Inglorious, lay me by the lowly brook,
 And whisper to my dreams. From Thee begin,
 Dwell all on Thee, with Thee conclude my song ;
 And let me never, never stray from Thee !

WINTER.

. Horrida cano
BRUMA gelu. —VIRG.

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE SIR SPENCER COMPTON.

SIR,

The author of the following Poem begs leave to inscribe this, his first performance, to your name and patronage. Unknown himself, and only introduced by the Muse, he yet ventures to approach you with a modest cheerfulness; for whoever attempts to excel in any generous art, though he comes alone, and unregarded by the world, may hope for your notice and esteem. Happy if I can, in any degree, merit this good fortune: as every ornament and grace of polite learning is yours, your single approbation will be my fame.

I dare not indulge my heart by dwelling on your public character; on that exalted honour and integrity which distinguish you in that august assembly where you preside; that unshaken loyalty to your sovereign; that disinterested concern for his people, which shine out united in all your behaviour, and finish the patriot. I am conscious of my want of strength and skill for so delicate an undertaking; and yet, as the shepherd in his cottage may feel and acknowledge the influence of the sun with as lively a gratitude as the great man in his palace, even I may be allowed to publish my sense of those blessings which, from so many powerful virtues, are derived to the nation they adorn.

I conclude with saying, that your fine discernment and humanity, in your private capacity, are so conspicuous, that if this address is not received with some indulgence, it will be a severe conviction that what I have written has not the least share of merit. I am, with the profoundest respect, Sir,

Your most devoted and most faithful humble servant,

JAMES THOMSON.

ARGUMENT.

The subject proposed. Address to the Earl of Wilmington. First approach of Winter. According to the natural course of the season, various storms described. Rain. Wind. Snow. The driving of the snows; a man perishing among them; whence reflections on the wants and miseries of human life. The wolves descending from the Alps and Apennines. A winter-evening described; as spent by philosophers; by the country people; in the city. Frost. A view of winter within the polar circle. A thaw. The whole concluding with moral reflections on a future state.

SEE, Winter comes, to rule the varied year,
Sullen and sad, with all his rising train,
Vapours, and clouds, and storms. Be these my
theme,

These! that exalt the soul to solemn thought,
And heavenly musing. Welcome, kindred glooms!
Congenial horrors, hail! with frequent foot,
Pleased have I, in my cheerful morn of life,
When nursed by careless Solitude I lived,
And sung of Nature with unceasing joy, [domain;
Pleased have I wander'd through your rough
Trode the pure virgin-snows, myself as pure;

Heard the winds roar, and the big torrent burst;
Or seen the deep-fermenting tempest brew'd
In the grim evening sky. Thus pass'd the time,
Till through the lucid chambers of the south
Look'd out the joyous Spring, look'd out, and smiled.

To thee, the patron of her first essay,
The Muse, O Wilmington! renews her song.
Since has she rounded the revolving year:
Skimm'd the gay Spring; on eagle-pinions borne,
Attempted through the Summer-blaze to rise;
Then swept o'er Autumn with the shadowy gale;
And now among the wintry clouds again,
Roll'd in the doubling storm, she tries to soar;
To swell her note with all the rushing winds;
To suit her sounding cadence to the floods;
As is her theme, her numbers wildly great:
Thrice happy could she fill thy judging ear
With bold description, and with manly thought.
Nor art thou skill'd in awful schemes alone,
And how to make a mighty people thrive;
But equal goodness, sound integrity,
A firm, unshaken, uncorrupted soul
Amid a sliding age, and burning strong,
Not vainly blazing, for thy country's weal,
A steady spirit regularly free;

These, each exalting each, the statesman light
 Into the patriot ; these, the public hope
 And eye to thee converting, bid the Muse
 Record what Envy dares not flattery call.

Now when the cheerless empire of the sky
 To Capricorn the Centaur Archer yields,
 And fierce Aquarius stains the inverted year ;
 Hung o'er the farthest verge of heaven, the sun
 Scarce spreads through ether the dejected day.
 Faint are his gleams, and ineffectual shoot
 His struggling rays, in horizontal lines,
 Through the thick air ; as clothed in cloudy storm,
 Weak, wan, and broad, he skirts the southern sky ;
 And, soon descending, to the long dark night,
 Wide-shading all, the prostrate world resigns.
 Nor is the night unwhish'd ; while vital heat,
 Light, life, and joy, the dubious day forsake.
 Meantime, in sable cincture, shadows vast,
 Deep-tinged and damp, and congregated clouds,
 And all the vapoury turbulence of heaven,
 Involve the face of things. Thus Winter falls,
 A heavy gloom oppressive o'er the world,
 Through Nature shedding influence malign,
 And rouses up the seeds of dark disease ;
 The soul of man dies in him, loathing life,
 And black with more than melancholy views.
 The cattle droop ; and o'er the furrow'd land,
 Fresh from the plough, the dun discolour'd flocks,
 Untended spreading, crop the wholesome root.
 Along the woods, along the moorish fens,
 Sighs the sad Genius of the coming storm ;
 And up among the loose disjointed cliffs,
 And fractured mountains wild, the brawling brook
 And cave, presageful, send a hollow moan,
 Resounding long in listening Fancy's ear.

Then comes the father of the tempest forth,
 Wrapt in black glooms. First joyless rains obscure
 Drive through the mingling skies with vapour foul ;
 Dash on the mountain's brow, and shake the woods,
 That grumbling wave below. The unsightly plain
 Lies a brown deluge ; as the low-bent clouds
 Pour flood on flood, yet, unexhausted, still
 Combine, and deepening into night shut up
 The day's fair face. The wanderers of heaven,
 Each to his home, retire ; save those that love
 To take their pastime in the troubled air,
 Or skimming flutter round the dimply pool.
 The cattle from the untasted fields return,
 And ask, with meaning low, their wonted stalls,
 Or ruminate in the contiguous shade.
 Thither the household feathery people crowd,
 The crested cock, with all his female train,
 Pensive, and dripping ; while the cottage hind
 Hangs o'er the enlivening blaze, and taleful there
 Recounts his simple frolic : much he talks,
 And much he laughs, nor recks the storm that
 Without, and rattles on his humble roof. [blows

Wide o'er the brim, with many a torrent swell'd,
 And the mix'd ruin of its banks o'erspread,
 At last the roused-up river pours along :
 Resistless, roaring, dreadful, down it comes
 From the rude mountain, and the mossy wild,
 Tumbling through rocks abrupt, and sounding far ;
 Then o'er the sanded valley floating spreads,
 Calm, sluggish, silent ; till again, constrain'd
 Between two meeting hills, it bursts away,
 Where rocks and woods o'erhang the turbid stream ;
 There gathering triple force, rapid, and deep,
 It boils, and wheels, and foams, and thunders
 through.

Nature ! great parent ! whose unceasing hand
 Rolls round the seasons of the changeful year,
 How mighty, how majestic, are thy works !
 With what a pleasing dread they swell the soul,
 That sees astonish'd, and astonish'd sings !
 Ye too, ye winds ! that now begin to blow
 With boisterous sweep, I raise my voice to you.
 Where are your stores, ye powerful beings ! say,
 Where your ærial magazines reserved,
 To swell the brooding terrors of the storm ?
 In what far distant region of the sky,
 Hush'd in deep silence, sleep ye when 'tis calm ?

When from the pallid sky the sun descends,
 With many a spot, that o'er his glaring orb
 Uncertain wanders, stain'd ; red fiery streaks
 Begin to flush around. The reeling clouds
 Stagger with dizzy poise, as doubting yet
 Which master to obey ; while rising slow,
 Blank, in the leaden-colour'd east, the moon
 Wears a wan circle round her blunted horns.
 Seen through the turbid fluctuating air,
 The stars obtuse emit a shiver'd ray ;
 Or frequent seem to shoot athwart the gloom,
 And long behind them trail the whitening blaze.
 Snatch'd in short eddies, plays the wither'd leaf ;
 And on the flood the dancing feather floats.
 With broaden'd nostrils to the sky up-turn'd,
 The conscious heifer snuffs the stormy gale.
 Even as the matron, at her nightly task,
 With pensive labour draws the flaxen thread,
 The wasted taper and the crackling flame
 Foretell the blast. But chief the plummy race,
 The tenants of the sky, its changes speak.
 Retiring from the downs, where all day long
 They pick'd their scanty fare, a blackening train
 Of clamorous rooks thick-urge their weary flight,
 And seek the closing shelter of the grove.
 Assiduous, in his bower, the wailing owl
 Plies his sad song. The cormorant on high
 Wheels from the deep, and screams along the land.
 Loud shrieks the soaring hern ; and with wild wing
 The circling sea-fowl cleave the flaky clouds.
 Ocean, unequal press'd, with broken tide
 And blind commotion heaves ; while from the shore,
 Eat into caverns by the restless wave,
 And forest-rustling mountains, comes a voice,
 That solemn sounding bids the world prepare.
 Then issues forth the storm with sudden burst,
 And hurls the whole precipitated air
 Down in a torrent. On the passive main
 Descends the ethereal force, and with strong gust
 Turns from its bottom the discolour'd deep.
 Through the black night that sits immense around,
 Lash'd into foam, the fierce conflicting brine
 Seems o'er a thousand raging waves to burn :
 Meantime the mountain-billows, to the clouds
 In dreadful tumult swell'd, surge above surge,
 Burst into chaos with tremendous roar,
 And anchor'd navies from their stations drive,
 Wild as the winds, across the howling waste
 Of mighty waters : now the inflated wave
 Straining they scale, and now impetuous shoot
 Into the secret chambers of the deep,
 The wintry Baltic thundering o'er their head.
 Emerging thence again, before the breath
 Of full-exerted heaven they wing their course,
 And dart on distant coasts ; if some sharp rock,
 Or shoal insidious, break not their career,
 And in loose fragments fling them floating round.
 Nor less on land the loosen'd tempest reigns.

The mountain thunders ; and its sturdy sons
 Steep to the bottom of the rocks they shade.
 Lone on the midnight steep, and all aghast,
 The dark way-faring stranger breathless toils,
 And, often falling, climbs against the blast.
 Low waves the rooted forest, vex'd, and sheds
 What of its tarnish'd honours yet remain ;
 Dash'd down, and scatter'd, by the tearing wind's
 Assiduous fury, its gigantic limbs.
 Thus struggling through the dissipated grove,
 The whirling tempest raves along the plain ;
 And on the cottage thatch'd, or lordly roof,
 Keen-fastening, shakes them to the solid base.
 Sleep frighted flies ; and round the rocking dome,
 For entrance eager, howls the savage blast.
 Then too, they say, through all the burden'd air,
 Long groans are heard, shrill sounds, and distant
 That, utter'd by the Demon of the night, [sighs,
 Warn the devoted wretch of woe and death.

Huge Up roar lords it wide. The clouds commix'd
 With stars swift gliding sweep along the sky.
 All Nature reels. Till Nature's King, who oft
 Amid tempestuous darkness dwells alone,
 And on the wings of the careering wind
 Walks dreadfully serene, commands a calm ;
 Then straight air, sea, and earth, are hush'd at once.

As yet 'tis midnight deep. The weary clouds,
 Slow-meeting, mingle into solid gloom.
 Now, while the drowsy world lies lost in sleep,
 Let me associate with the serious Night,
 And Contemplation, her sedate compeer ;
 Let me shake off the intrusive cares of day,
 And lay the meddling senses all aside.

Where now, ye lying vanities of life !
 Ye ever-tempting, ever-cheating train !
 Where are you now ? and what is your amount ?
 Vexation, disappointment, and remorse.
 Sad, sickening thought ! and yet deluded man,
 A scene of crude disjointed visions pass'd,
 And broken slumbers, rises still resolved,
 With new-flush'd hopes, to run the giddy round.

Father of light and life ! thou Good Supreme !
 O teach me what is good ! teach me Thyself !
 Save me from folly, vanity, and vice,
 From every low pursuit ! and feed my soul
 With knowledge, conscious peace, and virtue pure ;
 Sacred, substantial, never-fading bliss !

The keener tempests rise : and fuming dun
 From all the livid east, or piercing north,
 Thick clouds ascend ; in whose capacious womb
 A vapoury deluge lies, to snow congeal'd ;
 Heavy they roll their fleecy world along,
 And the sky saddens with the gather'd storm.
 Through the hush'd air the whitening shower
 descends,

At first thin wavering ; till at last the flakes
 Fall broad, and wide, and fast, dimming the day
 With a continual flow. The cherish'd fields
 Put on their winter-robe of purest white.
 'Tis brightness all, save where the new snow melts
 Along the mazy current. Low the woods
 Bow their hoar head ; and ere the languid sun
 Faint from the west emits his evening ray,
 Earth's universal face, deep hid, and chill,
 Is one wild dazzling waste, that buries wide
 The works of man. Drooping, the labourer ox
 Stands cover'd o'er with snow, and then demands
 The fruit of all his toil. The fowls of heaven,
 Tamed by the cruel season, crowd around
 The winnowing store, and claim the little boon

Which Providence assigns them. One alone,
 The red-breast, sacred to the household gods,
 Wisely regardless of the embroiling sky,
 In joyless fields and thorny thickets leaves
 His shivering mates, and pays to trusted man
 His annual visit. Half afraid, he first
 Against the window beats ; then, brisk, alights
 On the warm hearth ; then, hopping o'er the floor,
 Eyes all the smiling family askance,
 And pecks, and starts, and wonders where he is :
 Till, more familiar grown, the table-crumbs
 Attract his slender feet.—The foodless wilds
 Pour forth their brown inhabitants. The hare,
 Though timorous of heart, and hard beset
 By death in various forms, dark snares, and dogs,
 And more unpitied men, the garden seeks,
 Urged on by fearless want. The bleating kind
 Eye the bleak heaven, and next the glistening earth,
 With looks of dumb despair ; then, sad-dispersed,
 Dig for the wither'd herb through heaps of snow.

Now, shepherds, to your helpless charge be kind,
 Baffle the raging year, and fill their pens
 With food at will ; lodge them below the storm,
 And watch them strict ; for from the bellowing east,
 In this dire season, oft the whirlwind's wing
 Sweeps up the burden of whole wintry plains
 At one wide waft, and o'er the hapless flocks,
 Hid in the hollow of two neighbouring hills,
 The billowy tempest whelms ; till, upward urged,
 The valley to a shining mountain swells,
 Tipp'd with a wreath high-curling in the sky.

As thus the snows arise ; and foul, and fierce,
 All Winter drives along the darken'd air ;
 In his own loose-revolving fields the swain
 Disaster'd stands ; sees other hills ascend,
 Of unknown joyless brow ; and other scenes,
 Of horrid prospect, shag the trackless plain :
 Nor finds the river, nor the forest, hid
 Beneath the formless wild ; but wanders on
 From hill to dale, still more and more astray ;
 Impatient flouncing through the drifted heaps,
 Stung with the thoughts of home ; the thoughts of
 home

Rush on his nerves, and call their vigour forth
 In many a vain attempt. How sinks his soul !
 What black despair, what horror fills his heart !
 When for the dusky spot, which fancy feign'd
 His tufted cottage rising through the snow,
 He meets the roughness of the middle waste,
 Far from the track and blest abode of man ;
 While round him night resistless closes fast,
 And every tempest, howling o'er his head,
 Renders the savage wilderness more wild.
 Then throng the busy shapes into his mind
 Of cover'd pits, unfathomably deep,
 A dire descent ! beyond the power of frost ;
 Of faithless bogs ; of precipices huge,
 Smooth'd up with snow ; and what is land unknown,
 What water of the still unfrozen spring,
 In the loose marsh or solitary lake,
 Where the fresh fountain from the bottom boils.
 These check his fearful steps ; and down he sinks,
 Beneath the shelter of the shapeless drift,
 Thinking o'er all the bitterness of death ;
 Mix'd with the tender anguish Nature shoots
 Through the wrung bosom of the dying man,
 His wife, his children, and his friends unseen.
 In vain for him the officious wife prepares
 The fire fair-blazing, and the vestment warm ;
 In vain his little children, peeping out

Into the mingling storm, demand their sire,
With tears of artless innocence. Alas !
Nor wife, nor children, more shall he behold ;
Nor friends, nor sacred home. On every nerve
The deadly Winter seizes ; shuts up sense ;
And, o'er his inmost vitals creeping cold,
Lays him along the snows a stiffen'd corse,
Stretch'd out, and bleaching in the northern blast.

Ah ! little think the gay licentious proud,
Whom pleasure, power, and affluence surround ;
They who their thoughtless hours in giddy mirth,
And wanton, often cruel, riot waste ;
Ah ! little think they, while they dance along,
How many feel, this very moment, death,
And all the sad variety of pain.

How many sink in the devouring flood,
Or more devouring flame. How many bleed,
By shameful variance betwixt man and man.
How many pine in want, and dungeon glooms ;
Shut from the common air and common use
Of their own limbs. How many drink the cup
Of baleful grief, or eat the bitter bread
Of misery. Sore pierced by wintry winds,
How many shrink into the sordid hut
Of cheerless poverty. How many shake
With all the fiercer tortures of the mind,
Unbounded passion, madness, guilt, remorse ;
Whence tumbled headlong from the height of life,
They furnish matter for the tragic Muse ;
Even in the vale where Wisdom loves to dwell,
With Friendship, Peace, and Contemplation join'd,
How many, rack'd with honest passions, droop
In deep retired distress. How many stand
Around the death-bed of their dearest friends,
And point the parting anguish. Thought, fond man !
Of these, and all the thousand nameless ills,
That one incessant struggle render life,
One scene of toil, of suffering, and of fate,
Vice in his high career would stand appall'd,
And heedless rambling Impulse learn to think ;
The conscious heart of Charity would warm,
And her wide wish Benevolence dilate ;
The social tear would rise, the social sigh ;
And into clear perfection, gradual bliss,
Refining still, the social passions work.

And here can I forget the generous band *,
Who, touch'd with human woe, redressive search'd
Into the horrors of the gloomy gaol,
Unpitied, and unheard, where Misery moans,
Where Sickness pines, where Thirst and Hunger
burn,

And poor Misfortune feels the lash of Vice ?
While in the land of Liberty, the land
Whose every street and public meeting glow
With open freedom, little tyrants raged ;
Snatch'd the lean morsel from the starving mouth ;
Tore from cold wintry limbs the tatter'd weed ;
Even robb'd them of the last of comforts, sleep ;
The free-born Briton to the dungeon chain'd,
Or, as the lust of cruelty prevail'd,
At pleasure mark'd him with inglorious stripes ;
And crush'd out lives, by secret barbarous ways,
That for their country would have toil'd or bled.
O great design ! if executed well,
With patient care, and wisdom-temper'd zeal.
Ye sons of Mercy ! yet resume the search,
Drag forth the legal monsters into light,
Wrench from their hands oppression's iron rod,

And bid the cruel feel the pains they give.
Much still untouched remains ; in this rank age,
Much is the patriot's weeding hand required.
The toils of law, (what dark insidious men
Have cumbrous added to perplex the truth,
And lengthen simple justice into trade)
How glorious were the day that saw these broke,
And every man within the reach of right !

By wintry famine roused, from all the tract
Of horrid mountains which the shining Alps,
And wavy Apennine, and Pyrenees,
Branch out stupendous into distant lands ;
Cruel as death, and hungry as the grave !
Burning for blood, bony, and gaunt, and grim !
Assembling wolves in raging troops descend ;
And, pouring o'er the country, bear along,
Keen as the north-wind sweeps the glossy snow.
All is their prize. They fasten on the steed,
Press him to earth, and pierce his mighty heart.
Nor can the bull his awful front defend,
Or shake the murdering savages away.
Rapacious, at the mother's throat they fly,
And tear the screaming infant from her breast.
The godlike face of man avails him nought.
Even beauty, force divine ! at whose bright glance
The generous lion stands in soften'd gaze,
Here bleeds, a hapless undistinguish'd prey.
But if, apprised of the severe attack,
The country be shut up, lured by the scent,
On churchyards drear (inhuman to relate !)
The disappointed prowlers fall, and dig
The shrouded body from the grave ; o'er which,
Mix'd with foul shades and frightened ghosts, they
howl.

Among those hilly regions, where embraced
In peaceful vales the happy Grisons dwell ;
Oft, rushing sudden from the loaded cliffs,
Mountains of snow their gathering terrors roll.
From steep to steep, loud-thundering down they
A wintry waste in dire commotion all ; [come,
And herds, and flocks, and travellers, and swains,
And sometimes whole brigades of marching troops,
Or hamlets sleeping in the dead of night,
Are deep beneath the smothering ruin whelm'd.

Now, all amid the rigours of the year,
In the wild depth of Winter, while without
The ceaseless winds blow ice, be my retreat,
Between the groaning forest and the shore
Beat by the boundless multitude of waves,
A rural, shelter'd, solitary scene ;
Where ruddy fire and beaming tapers join
To cheer the gloom. There studious let me sit,
And hold high converse with the mighty Dead ;
Sages of ancient time, as gods revered,
As gods beneficent, who bless'd mankind
With arts, with arms, and humanised a world.
Roused at the inspiring thought, I throw aside
The long-lived volume ; and, deep-musing, hail
The sacred shades, that slowly-rising pass
Before my wondering eyes. First Socrates,
Who, firmly good in a corrupted state,
Against the rage of tyrants single stood,
Invincible ! calm Reason's holy law,
That Voice of God within the attentive mind,
Obeying, fearless, or in life, or death :
Great moral teacher ! wisest of mankind !
Solon the next, who built his common weal
On equity's wide base ; by tender laws
A lively people curbing, yet undamp'd ;
Preserving still that quick peculiar fire,

* The Gaol Committee, in the year 1729.

Whence in the laurel'd field of finer arts
 And of bold freedom, they unequal'd shone,
 The pride of smiling Greece, and humankind.
 Lyeurgus then, who bow'd beneath the force
 Of strictest discipline, severely wise,
 All human passions. Following him, I see,
 As at Thermopylæ he glorious fell,
 The firm devoted chief *, who proved by deeds
 The hardest lesson which the other taught.
 Then Aristides lifts his honest front ;
 Spotless of heart, to whom the unflattering voice
 Of Freedom gave the noblest name of Just ;
 In pure majestic poverty revered ;
 Who, even his glory to his country's weal
 Submitting, swell'd a haughty rival's † fame.
 Rear'd by his care, of softer ray appears
 Cimon, sweet-soul'd ; whose genius, rising strong,
 Shook off the load of young debauch ; abroad
 The scourge of Persian pride, at home the friend
 Of every worth and every splendid art ;
 Modest, and simple, in the pomp of wealth.
 Then the last worthies of declining Greece,
 Late call'd to glory, in unequal times,
 Pensive, appear. The fair Corinthian boast,
 Timoleon, happy temper ! mild, and firm,
 Who wept the brother while the tyrant bled.
 And, equal to the best, the Theban pair ‡,
 Whose virtues, in heroic concord join'd,
 Their country raised to freedom, empire, fame.
 He too, with whom Athenian honour sunk,
 And left a mass of sordid lees behind,
 Phocion the Good ; in public life severe,
 To virtue still inexorably firm ;
 But when, beneath his low illustrious roof,
 Sweet Peace and happy Wisdom smooth'd his brow,
 Not Friendship softer was, nor Love more kind.
 And he, the last of old Lyeurgus' sons,
 The generous victim to that vain attempt,
 To save a rotten state, Agis, who saw
 Even Sparta's self to servile avarice sunk.
 The two Achaian heroes close the train :
 Aratus, who awhile relumed the soul
 Of fondly lingering Liberty in Greece ;
 And he her darling, as her latest hope,
 The gallant Philopemen ; who to arms
 Turn'd the luxurious pomp he could not cure ;
 Or toiling in his farm, a simple swain,
 Or, bold and skilful, thundering in the field.

Of rougher front, a mighty people come !
 A race of heroes ! in those virtuous times
 Which knew no stain, save that with partial flame
 Their dearest country they too fondly loved :
 Her better Founder first, the light of Rome,
 Numa, who soften'd her rapacious sons ;
 Servius the king, who laid the solid base
 On which o'er earth the vast republic spread.
 Then the great consuls venerable rise :
 The public Father § who the private quell'd,
 As on the dread tribunal sternly sad ;
 He, whom his thankless country could not lose,
 Camillus, only vengeful to her foes ;
 Fabricius, scorner of all-conquering gold ;
 And Cincinnatus, awful from the plough :
 Thy willing victim ||, Carthage, bursting loose
 From all that pleading Nature could oppose,
 From a whole city's tears, by rigid faith

Imperious call'd, and Honour's dire command ;
 Scipio, the gentle chief, humanely brave,
 Who soon the race of spotless glory ran,
 And, warm in youth, to the poetic shade
 With friendship and philosophy retired ;
 Tully, whose powerful eloquence awhile
 Restrain'd the rapid fate of rushing Rome ;
 Unconquer'd Cato, virtuous in extreme ;
 And thou, unhappy Brutus, kind of heart,
 Whose steady arm, by awful virtue urged,
 Lifted the Roman steel against thy friend :
 Thousands besides the tribute of a verse
 Demand ; but who can count the stars of heaven ?
 Who sing their influence on this lower world ?

Behold, who yonder comes ! in sober state,
 Fair, mild, and strong, as is a vernal sun :
 'Tis Phœbus' self, or else the Mantuan Swain !
 Great Homer too appears, of daring wing,
 Parent of song ! and, equal by his side,
 The British Muse ; join'd hand in hand they walk,
 Darkling, full up the middle steep to fame.
 Nor absent are those shades, whose skilful touch
 Pathetic drew the impassion'd heart, and charm'd
 Transported Athens with the moral scene ;
 Nor those who, tuneful, waked the enchanting lyre.

First of your kind ! society divine !
 Still visit thus my nights, for you reserved,
 And mount my soaring soul to thoughts like yours,
 Silence, thou lonely power ! the door be thine ;
 See on the hallow'd hour that none intrude,
 Save a few chosen friends, who sometimes deign
 To bless my humble roof, with sense refined,
 Learning digested well, exalted faith,
 Unstudied wit, and humour ever gay.
 Or from the Muses' hill will Pope descend,
 To raise the sacred hour, to bid it smile,
 And with the social spirit warm the heart ?
 For though not sweeter his own Homer sings,
 Yet is his life the more endearing song. [pride,

Where art thou, Hammond ? thou, the darling
 The friend and lover of the tuneful throng !
 Ah why, dear youth, in all the blooming prime
 Of vernal genius, where disclosing fast
 Each active worth, each manly virtue lay,
 Why wert thou ravish'd from our hope so soon ?
 What now avails that noble thirst of fame,
 Which stung thy fervent breast ? that treasured store
 Of knowledge early gain'd ? that eager zeal
 To serve thy country, glowing in the band
 Of youthful patriots, who sustain her name ?
 What now, alas ! that life-diffusing charm
 Of sprightly wit ? that rapture for the Muse,
 That heart of friendship, and that soul of joy,
 Which bade with softest light thy virtues smile ?
 Ah ! only show'd, to check our fond pursuits,
 And teach our humbled hopes that life is vain !

Thus in some deep retirement would I pass
 The winter-glooms, with friends of pliant soul,
 Or blithe, or solemn, as the theme inspired,
 With them would search, if Nature's boundless

frame

Was call'd, late-rising from the void of night,
 Or sprung eternal from the Eternal Mind ;
 Its life, its laws, its progress, and its end.
 Hence larger prospects of the beauteous whole
 Would, gradual, open on our opening minds ;
 And each diffusive harmony unite
 In full perfection to the astonish'd eye.
 Then would we try to scan the moral world,
 Which, though to us it seems embroil'd, moves on

* Leonidas. † Themistocles.

‡ Pelopidas and Epaminondas.

§ Marcus Junius Brutus. || Regulus.

In higher order ; fitted and impell'd
 By Wisdom's finest hand, and issuing all
 In general good. The sage historic Muse
 Should next conduct us through the deeps of time :
 Show us how empire grew, declined, and fell,
 In scatter'd states ; what makes the nations smile,
 Improves their soil, and gives them double suns ;
 And why they peep beneath the brightest skies,
 In Nature's richest lap. As thus we talk'd,
 Our hearts would burn within us, would inhale
 That portion of divinity, that ray
 Of purest heaven, which lights the public soul
 Of patriots and of heroes. But if doom'd,
 In powerless humble fortune, to repress
 These ardent risings of the kindling soul ;
 Then, even superior to ambition, we
 Would learn the private virtues : how to glide
 Through shades and plains, along the smoothest
 stream

Of rural life ; or snatch'd away by hope,
 Through the dim spaces of futurity,
 With earnest eye anticipate those scenes
 Of happiness and wonder ; where the mind,
 In endless growth and infinite ascent,
 Rises from state to state, and world to world.
 But, when with these the serious thought is foil'd,
 We, shifting for relief, would play the shapes
 Of frolic Fancy ; and incessant form
 Those rapid pictures, that assembled train
 Of fleet ideas, never join'd before,
 Whence lively Wit excites to gay surprise ;
 Or folly-painting Humour, grave himself,
 Calls Laughter forth, deep-shaking every nerve.

Meantime the village rouses up the fire ;
 While well-attested, and as well believed,
 Heard solemn, goes the goblin story round ;
 Till superstitious horror creeps o'er all.
 Or, frequent in the sounding hall, they wake
 The rural gambol. Rustic mirth goes round ;
 The simple joke that takes the shepherd's heart,
 Easily pleased ; the long loud laugh, sincere ;
 The kiss, snatch'd hasty from the side-long maid,
 On purpose guardless, or pretending sleep :
 The leap, the slap, the haul ; and, shook to notes
 Of native music, the respondent dance.
 Thus jocund fleets with them the winter-night.

The city swarms intense. The public haunt,
 Full of each theme, and warm with mix'd discourse,
 Hums indistinct. The sons of riot flow
 Down the loose stream of false enchanted joy,
 To swift destruction. On the rankled soul
 The gaming fury falls ; and in one gulf
 Of total ruin, honour, virtue, peace,
 Friends, families, and fortune, headlong sink.
 Up-springs the dance along the lighted dome,
 Mix'd and evolved, a thousand sprightly ways.
 The glittering court effuses every pomp ;
 The circle deepens : beam'd from gaudy robes,
 Tapers, and sparkling gems, and radiant eyes,
 A soft effulgence o'er the palace waves :
 While, a gay insect in his summer-shine,
 The fop, light-fluttering, spreads his mealy wings.

Dread o'er the scene, the ghost of Hamlet stalks ;
 Othello rages ; poor Monimia mourns ;
 And Belvidera pours her soul in love.
 Terror alarms the breast ; the comely tear
 Steals o'er the cheek : or else the Comic Muse
 Holds to the world a picture of itself,
 And raises sly the fair impartial laugh.
 Sometimes she lifts her strain, and paints the scenes

Of beauteous life ; whate'er can deck mankind,
 Or charm the heart, in generous Bevil* show'd.

O Thou, whose wisdom, solid yet refined,
 Whose patriot virtues, and consummate skill
 To touch the finer springs that move the world,
 Join'd to whate'er the Graces can bestow,
 And all Apollo's animating fire,
 Give thee, with pleasing dignity, to shine
 At once the guardian, ornament, and joy
 Of polish'd life ; permit the rural Muse,
 O Chesterfield ! to grace with thee her song,
 Ere to the shades again she humbly flies,
 Indulge her fond ambition, in thy train,
 (For every Muse has in thy train a place)
 To mark thy various full-accomplish'd mind :
 To mark that spirit, which, with British scorn,
 Rejects the allurements of corrupted power ;
 That elegant politeness, which excels,
 Even in the judgment of presumptuous France,
 The boasted manners of her shining court ;
 That wit, the vivid energy of sense,
 The truth of Nature, which, with Attic point,
 And kind well-temper'd satire, smoothly keen,
 Steals through the soul, and without pain corrects.
 Or, rising thence with yet a brighter flame,
 O let me hail thee on some glorious day,
 When to the listening senate, ardent, crowd
 Britannia's sons to hear her pleaded cause.
 Then, dress'd by thee, more amiably fair,
 Truth the soft robe of mild Persuasion wears ;
 Thou to assenting Reason givest again
 Her own enlighten'd thoughts ; call'd from the
 heart,

The obedient passions on thy voice attend ;
 And even reluctant Party feels awhile
 Thy gracious power, as through the varied maze
 Of eloquence, now smooth, now quick, now strong,
 Profound and clear, you roll the copious flood.

To thy loved haunt return, my happy Muse ;
 For now, behold, the joyous winter-days,
 Frosty, succeed ; and through the blue serene,
 For sight too fine, the ethereal nitre flies,
 Killing infectious damps, and the spent air
 Storing afresh with elemental life.
 Close crowds the shining atmosphere, and binds
 Our strengthen'd bodies in its cold embrace,
 Constraining ; feeds and animates our blood ;
 Refines our spirits, through the new-strung nerves
 In swifter sallies darting to the brain ;
 Where sits the soul, intense, collected, cool,
 Bright as the skies, and as the season keen.
 All Nature feels the renovating force
 Of Winter, only to the thoughtless eye
 In ruin seen. The frost-concocted glebe
 Draws in abundant vegetable soul,
 And gathers vigour for the coming year.
 A stronger glow sits on the lively cheek
 Of ruddy Fire, and luculent along
 The purer rivers flow ; their sullen deeps,
 Transparent, open to the shepherd's gaze,
 And murmur hoarser at the fixing frost.

What art thou, frost ? and whence are thy keen
 Derived, thou secret all-invading power, [stores
 Whom even the illusive fluid cannot fly ?
 Is not thy potent energy, unseen,
 Myriads of little salts or hook'd, or shaped
 Like double wedges, and diffused immense
 Through water, earth, and ether ? Hence at eve,

* A character in "The Conscious Lovers," by Sir R. Steele.

Steam'd eager from the red horizon round,
 With the fierce rage of Winter deep suffused,
 An icy gale, oft shifting, o'er the pool
 Breathes a blue film, and in its mid career
 Arrests the bickering stream. The loosen'd ice,
 Let down the flood, and half dissolved by day,
 Rustles no more ; but to the sedgy bank
 Fast grows, or gathers round the pointed stone,
 A crystal pavement, by the breath of heaven
 Cemented firm ; till, seized from shore to shore,
 The whole imprison'd river growls below.
 Loud rings the frozen earth, and hard reflects
 A double noise ; while, at his evening watch,
 The village dog deters the nightly thief ;
 The heifer lows ; the distant water-fall
 Swells in the breeze ; and, with the hasty tread
 Of traveller, the hollow-sounding plain
 Shakes from afar. The full ethereal round,
 Infinite worlds disclosing to the view,
 Shines out intensely keen ; and, all one cope
 Of starry glitter, glows from pole to pole.
 From pole to pole the rigid influence falls,
 Through the still night, incessant, heavy, strong,
 And seizes Nature fast. It freezes on :
 Till Morn, late rising o'er the drooping world,
 Lifts her pale eye unjoyous. Then appears
 The various labour of the silent night :
 Prone from the dripping cave, and dumb cascade,
 Whose idle torrents only seem to roar,
 The pendent icicle ; the frost-work fair,
 Where transient hues, and fancied figures rise ;
 Wide spouted o'er the hill, the frozen brook,
 A livid tract, cold-gleaming on the morn ;
 The forest bent beneath the plummy wave ;
 And by the frost refined the whiter snow,
 Encrusted hard, and sounding to the tread
 Of early shepherd, as he pensive seeks
 His pining flock, or from the mountain top,
 Pleased with the slippery surface, swift descends.

On blithesome frolics bent, the youthful swains,
 While every work of man is laid at rest,
 Fond o'er the river crowd, in various sport
 And revelry dissolved ; where mixing glad,
 Happiest of all the train ! the raptured boy
 Lashes the whirling top. Or, where the Rhine
 Branch'd out in many a long canal extends,
 From every province swarming, void of care,
 Batavia rushes forth ; and as they sweep,
 On sounding skates, a thousand different ways,
 In circling poise, swift as the winds, along,
 The then gay land is madden'd all to joy.
 Nor less the northern courts, wide o'er the snow,
 Pour a new pomp. Eager on rapid sleds,
 Their vigorous youth in bold contention wheel
 The long-resounding course. Meantime to raise
 The manly strife, with highly blooming charms,
 Flush'd by the season, Scandinavia's dames,
 Or Russia's buxom daughters, glow around.

Pure, quick, and sportful is the wholesome day :
 But soon elapsed. The horizontal sun,
 Broad o'er the south, hangs at its utmost noon,
 And, ineffectual, strikes the gelid cliff ;
 His azure gloss the mountain still maintains,
 Nor feels the feeble touch. Perhaps the vale
 Relents awhile to the reflected ray ;
 Or from the forest falls the cluster'd snow,
 Myriads of gems, that in the waving gleam
 Gay-twinkle as they scatter. Thick around
 Thunders the sport of those, who with the gun,
 And dog impatient bounding at the shot,

Worse than the season desolate the fields ;
 And, adding to the ruins of the year,
 Distress the footed or the feather'd game.

But what is this ? our infant Winter sinks,
 Divested of his grandeur, should our eye
 Astonish'd shoot into the frigid zone,
 Where, for relentless months, continual Night
 Holds o'er the glittering waste her starry reign.

There, through the prison of unbounded wilds,
 Barr'd by the hand of Nature from escape,
 Wide roams the Russian exile. Nought around
 Strikes his sad eye but deserts lost in snow ;
 And heavy-loaded groves ; and solid floods
 That stretch athwart the solitary waste
 Their icy horrors to the frozen main ;
 And cheerless towns far distant, never bless'd
 Save when its annual course the caravan
 Bends to the golden coast of rich Cathay *,
 With news of human kind. Yet there life glows ;
 Yet cherish'd there, beneath the shining waste,
 The furry nations harbour : tipp'd with jet,
 Fair ermines, spotless as the snows they press ;
 Sables, of glossy black ; and dark embrown'd,
 Or beauteous freak'd with many a mingled hue,
 Thousands besides, the costly pride of courts.
 There, warm together press'd, the trooping deer
 Sleep on the new-fallen snows ; and, scarce his head
 Raised o'er the heavy wreath, the branching elk
 Lies slumbering sullen in the white abyss.
 The ruthless hunter wants nor dogs nor toils,
 Nor with the dread of sounding bows he drives
 The fearful flying race ; with ponderous clubs,
 As weak against the mountain heaps they push
 Their beating breast in vain, and piteous bray,
 He lays them quivering on the ensanguined snows,
 And with loud shouts rejoicing bears them home.
 There through the piny forest half absorb'd,
 Rough tenant of these shades, the shapeless bear,
 With dangling ice all horrid, stalks forlorn ;
 Slow-paced, and sourer as the storms increase,
 He makes his bed beneath the inclement drift,
 And with stern patience, scorning weak complaint,
 Hardens his heart against assailing want.

Wide o'er the spacious regions of the north,
 That see Boëtus urge his tardy wain,
 A boisterous race, by frosty Caurus † pierced,
 Who little pleasure know and fear no pain,
 Prolific swarm. They once relumed the flame
 Of lost mankind, in polish'd slavery sunk ;
 Drove martial horde on horde ‡, with dreadful sweep
 Restless rushing o'er the enfeebled south,
 And gave the vanquish'd world another form.
 Not such the sons of Lapland : wisely they
 Despise the insensate barbarous trade of war ;
 They ask no more than simple Nature gives ;
 They love their mountains and enjoy their storms.
 No false desires, no pride-created wants,
 Disturb the peaceful current of their time ;
 And through the restless ever-tortured maze
 Of pleasure, or ambition, bid it rage. [tents,
 Their rein-deer form their riches. These their
 Their robes, their beds, and all their homely wealth
 Supply, their wholesome fare and cheerful cups.
 Obsequious at their call, the docile tribe
 Yield to the sled their necks, and whirl them swift
 O'er hill and dale, heap'd into one expanse
 Of marbled snow, as far as eye can sweep,
 With a blue crust of ice unbanded glazed.

* The old name for China. † The north-west wind.

‡ The wandering Scythian clans.

By dancing meteors then, that ceaseless shake
 A waving blaze refracted o'er the heavens,
 And vivid moons, and stars that keener play
 With doubled lustre from the glossy waste,
 Even in the depth of polar night they find
 A wondrous day ; enough to light the chase,
 Or guide their daring steps to Finland fairs.
 Wish'd Spring returns ; and from the hazy south,
 While dim Aurora slowly moves before,
 The welcome sun, just verging up at first,
 By small degrees extends the swelling curve,
 Till seen at last for gay rejoicing months,
 Still round and round his spiral course he winds,
 And, as he nearly dips his flaming orb,
 Wheels up again, and re-ascends the sky.
 In that glad season, from the lakes and floods,
 Where pure Niemi's* fairy mountains rise,
 And fringed with roses Tengio† rolls his stream,
 They draw the copious fry. With these, at eve,
 They cheerful loaded to their tents repair ;
 Where, all day long in useful cares employ'd,
 Their kind unblemish'd wives the fire prepare.
 Thrice happy race ! by poverty secured
 From legal plunder and rapacious power :
 In whom fell interest never yet has sown
 The seeds of vice : whose spotless swains ne'er knew
 Injurious deed, nor, blasted by the breath
 Of faithless love, their blooming daughters woe.

Still pressing on, beyond Tornea's lake,
 And Hecla flaming through a waste of snow,
 And farthest Greenland, to the pole itself,
 Where, failing gradual, life at length goes out,
 The Muse expands her solitary flight ;
 And, hovering o'er the wild stupendous scene,
 Beholds new seas beneath another sky‡.
 Throned in his palace of cerulean ice,
 Here Winter holds his unrejoicing court ;
 And through his airy hall the loud misrule
 Of driving tempest is for ever heard ;
 Here the grim tyrant meditates his wrath ;
 Here arms his winds with all-subduing frost,
 Moulds his fierce hail, and treasures up his snows,
 With which he now oppresses half the globe.

Thence winding eastward to the Tartar's coast,
 She sweeps the howling margin of the main ;
 Where undissolving, from the first of time,
 Snows swell on snows amazing to the sky ;
 And icy mountains high on mountains piled
 Seem to the shivering sailor from afar,
 Shapeless and white, an atmosphere of clouds.
 Projected huge, and horrid o'er the surge,
 Alps frown on Alps ; or rushing hideous down,
 As if old Chaos were again return'd,
 Wide-rend the deep, and shake the solid pole.
 Ocean itself no longer can resist
 The binding fury ; but, in all its rage
 Of tempest taken by the boundless frost,

* M. de Maupertuis, in his book on the "Figure of the Earth," after having described the beautiful lake and mountain of Niemi in Lapland, says, "From this height we had opportunity several times to see those vapours rise from the lake which the people of the country call *Haltios*, and which they deem to be the guardian spirits of the mountains. We had been frightened with stories of bears that haunted this place, but saw none. It seemed rather a place of resort for fairies and genii than bears."

† The same author observes, "I was surprised to see upon the banks of this river (the Tengio) roses of as lively a red as any that are in our gardens."

‡ The other hemisphere.

Is many a fathom to the bottom chain'd,
 And bid to roar no more : a bleak expanse,
 Shagg'd o'er with wavy rocks, cheerless, and void
 Of every life, that from the dreary months
 Flies conscious southward. Miserable they !
 Who, here entangled in the gathering ice,
 Take their last look of the descending sun ;
 While, full of death, and fierce with tenfold frost,
 The long long night, incumbent o'er their heads,
 Falls horrible. Such was the Briton's* fate,
 As with first prow (what have not Britons dared!)
 He for the passage sought, attempted since
 So much in vain, and seeming to be shut
 By jealous Nature with eternal bars.
 In these fell regions, in Arzina caught,
 And to the stony deep his idle ship
 Immediate seal'd, he with his hapless crew,
 Each full exerted at his several task,
 Froze into statues ; to the cordage glued
 The sailor, and the pilot to the helm.

Hard by these shores, where scarce his freezing stream

Rolls the wild Oby, live the last of men ;
 And half enliven'd by the distant sun,
 That rears and ripens man, as well as plants,
 Here human nature wears its rudest form.
 Deep from the piercing season sunk in caves,
 Here by dull fires, and with unjoyous cheer,
 They waste the tedious gloom. Immersed in furs,
 Doze the gross race. Nor sprightly jest, nor song,
 Nor tenderness they know ; nor aught of life
 Beyond the kindred bears that stalk without.
 Till Morn at length, her roses drooping all,
 Sheds a long twilight brightening o'er their fields,
 And calls the quiver'd savage to the chase.

What cannot active government perform,
 New-moulding man ? Wide-stretching from these
 A people savage from remotest time, [shores,
 A huge neglected empire, one vast mind,
 By heaven inspired, from Gothic darkness call'd.
 Immortal Peter ! first of monarchs ! He
 His stubborn country tamed, her rocks, her fens,
 Her floods, her seas, her ill-submitting sons ;
 And while the fierce barbarian he subdued,
 To more exalted soul he raised the man.
 Ye shades of ancient heroes, ye who toil'd
 Through long successive ages to build up
 A labouring plan of state, behold at once
 The wonder done ! behold the matchless prince !
 Who left his native throne, where reign'd till then
 A mighty shadow of unreal power ;
 Who greatly spurn'd the slothful pomp of courts ;
 And roaming every land, in every port
 His sceptre laid aside, with glorious hand
 Unwearied plying the mechanic tool,
 Gather'd the seeds of trade, of useful arts,
 Of civil wisdom, and of martial skill.
 Charged with the stores of Europe home he goes !
 Then cities rise amid the illumined waste ;
 O'er joyless deserts smiles the rural reign ;
 Far-distant flood to flood is social join'd ;
 The astonish'd Euxine hears the Baltic roar ;
 Proud navies ride on seas that never foam'd
 With daring keel before ; and armies stretch
 Each way their dazzling files, repressing here
 The frantic Alexander of the North,
 And awing there stern Othman's shrinking sons.
 Sloth flies the land, and Ignorance, and Vice,

* Sir Hugh Willoughby, sent by Queen Elizabeth to discover the north-east passage.

Of old dishonour proud ; it glows around,
Taught by the royal hand that roused the whole,
One scene of arts, of arms, of rising trade ;
For what his wisdom plann'd, and power enforced,
More potent still, his great example show'd.

Muttering the winds at eve, with blunted point,
Blow hollow-blustering from the south. Subdued,
The frost resolves into a trickling thaw.
Spotted the mountains shine ; loose sleet descends,
And floods the country round. The rivers swell,
Of bonds impatient. Sudden from the hills,
O'er rocks and woods, in broad brown cataracts,
A thousand snow-fed torrents shoot at once ;
And, where they rush, the wide resounding plain
Is left one slimy waste. Those sullen seas,
That wash'd the ungenial pole, will rest no more
Beneath the shackles of the mighty north ;
But, rousing all their waves, resistless heave.
And hark ! the lengthening roar continuous runs
Athwart the rifted deep : at once it bursts,
And piles a thousand mountains to the clouds.
Ill fares the bark, with trembling wretches
charged,

That, toss'd amid the floating fragments, moors
Beneath the shelter of an icy isle,
While night o'erwhelms the sea, and horror looks
More horrible. Can human force endure
The assembled mischiefs that besiege them round ?
Heart-gnawing hunger, fainting weariness,
The roar of winds and waves, the crush of ice,
Now ceasing, now renew'd with louder rage,
And in dire echoes bellowing round the main.
More to embroil the deep, Leviathan
And his unwieldy train, in dreadful sport,
Tempest the loosen'd brine, while through the
gloom,

Far from the bleak inhospitable shore,
Loading the winds, is heard the hungry howl
Of famish'd monsters, there awaiting wrecks.
But Providence, that ever-waking eye,
Looks down with pity on the feeble toil
Of mortals lost to hope, and lights them safe
Through all this dreary labyrinth of fate.

'Tis done ! dread Winter spreads his latest
glooms,
And reigns tremendous o'er the conquer'd Year.

How dead the vegetable kingdoma lies !
How dumb the tuneful ! Horror wide extends
His desolate domain. Behold, fond man !
See here thy pictured life ; pass some few years,
Thy flowering Spring, thy Summer's ardent
strength,

Thy sober Autumn fading into age,
And pale concluding Winter comes at last,
And shuts the scene. Ah ! whither now are fled
Those dreams of greatness ? those unsolid hopes
Of happiness ? those longings after fame ?
Those restless cares ? those busy bustling days ?
Those gay-spent, festive nights ! those veering
thoughts,

Lost between good and ill, that shared thy life ?
All now are vanish'd ! Virtue sole survives,
Immortal never-failing friend of man,
His guide to happiness on high. And see !
'Tis come, the glorious morn ! the second birth
Of heaven and earth. Awakening Nature hears
The new-creating word, and starts to life,
In every heighten'd form, from pain and death
For ever free. The great eternal scheme,
Involving all, and in a perfect whole
Uniting, as the prospect wider spreads,
To Reason's eye refined clears up apace.
Ye vainly wise ! ye blind presumptuous ! now,
Confounded in the dust, adore that Power
And wisdom oft arraign'd : see now the cause
Why unassuming Worth in secret lived,
And died neglected ; why the good man's share
In life was gall and bitterness of soul ;
Why the lone widow and her orphans pined
In starving solitude, while Luxury
In palaces lay straining her low thought
To form unreal wants ; why heaven-born Truth,
And Moderation fair, wore the red marks
Of Superstition's scourge ; why licensed Pain,
That cruel spoiler, that embosom'd foe,
Embitter'd all our bliss. Ye good distress'd !
Ye noble few ! who here unbending stand
Beneath life's pressure, yet bear up awhile,
And what your bounded view, which only saw
A little part, deem'd evil, is no more :
The storms of Wintry Time will quickly pass,
And one unbounded Spring encircle all.

A HYMN.

THESE, as they change, Almighty Father, these
Are but the varied God. The rolling year
Is full of Thee. Forth in the pleasing Spring
Thy beauty walks, thy tenderness and love.
Wide flush the fields ; the softening air is balm ;
Echo the mountains round ; the forest smiles ;
And every sense and every heart is joy.
Then comes thy glory in the Summer-months,
With light and heat refulgent. Then thy sun
Shoots full perfection through the swelling year ;
And oft thy voice in dreadful thunder speaks ;
And oft at dawn, deep noon, or falling eve,
By brooks and groves, in hollow-whispering gales,
Thy bounty shines in Autumn unconfin'd,
And spreads a common feast for all that lives.

In Winter awful Thou ! with clouds and storms
Around Thee thrown, tempest o'er tempest roll'd.
Majestic darkness ! on the whirlwind's wing
Riding sublime, Thou bid'st the world adore,
And humblest Nature with thy northern blast.

Mysterious round ! what skill, what force divine,
Deep felt, in these appear ! a simple train,
Yet so delightful mix'd, with such kind art,
Such beauty and beneficence combined,
Shade, unperceived, so softening into shade,
And all so forming an harmonious whole,
That, as they still succeed, they ravish still.
But wandering oft, with brute unconscious gaze,
Man marks not Thee, marks not the mighty hand
That, ever-busy, wheels the silent spheres ;

Works in the secret deep ; shoots, steaming, thence
The fair profusion that o'erspreads the Spring ;
Flings from the sun direct the flaming day ;
Feeds every creature ; hurls the tempest forth ;
And, as on earth this grateful change revolves,
With transport touches all the springs of life.

Nature, attend ! join every living soul
Beneath the spacious temple of the sky,
In adoration join ; and, ardent, raise
One general song ! To Him, ye vocal gales,
Breathe soft, whose spirit in your freshness
breathes :

Oh, talk of Him in solitary glooms !
Where, o'er the rock, the scarcely waving pine
Fills the brown shade with a religious awe.

And ye, whose bolder note is heard afar,
Who shake the astonish'd world, lift high to heaven
The impetuous song, and say from whom you rage.
His praise, ye brooks, attune, ye trembling rills ;
And let me catch it as I muse along.

Ye headlong torrents, rapid and profound ;
Ye softer floods, that lead the humid maze
Along the vale ; and thou, majestic main,
A secret world of wonders in thyself,
Sound His stupendous praise ; whose greater voice
Or bids you roar, or bids your roarings fall.
Soft roll your incense, herbs, and fruits and flowers,
In mingled clouds to him ; whose sun exalts,
Whose breath perfumes you, and whose pencil
paints.

Ye forests, bend, ye harvests, wave to Him ;
Breathe your still song into the reaper's heart,
As home he goes beneath the joyous moon.
Ye that keep watch in heaven, as earth asleep
Unconscious lies, effuse your mildest beams,
Ye constellations, while your angels strike,
Amid the spangled sky, the silver lyre.
Great source of day ! best image here below
Of thy Creator, ever pouring wide,
From world to world, the vital ocean round,
On Nature write with every beam His praise.
The thunder rolls : be hush'd the prostrate world ;
While cloud to cloud returns the solemn hymn.
Beat out afresh, ye hills : ye mossy rocks,
Retain the sound : the broad responsive low,

Ye valleys, raise ; for the Great Shepherd reigns,
And his unsuffering kingdom yet will come.
Ye woodlands all, awake : a boundless song
Burst from the groves ! and when the restless day,
Expiring, lays the warbling world asleep,
Sweetest of birds, sweet Philomela, charm
The listening shades, and teach the night His praise.
Ye chief, for whom the whole creation smiles,
At once the head, the heart, and tongue of all,
Crown the great Hymn ! In swarming cities vast,
Assembled men, to the deep organ join
The long-resounding voice, oft breaking clear,
At solemn pauses, through the swelling base ;
And, as each mingling flame increases each,
In one united ardour rise to heaven.

Or if you rather chuse the rural shade,
And find a fane in every sacred grove ;
There let the shepherd's flute, the virgin's lay,
The prompting seraph, and the poet's lyre,
Still sing the God of Seasons as they roll !
For me, when I forget the darling theme,
Whether the blossom blows, the Summer ray
Russets the plain, inspiring Autumn gleams,
Or Winter rises in the blackening east ;
Be my tongue mute, may Fancy paint no more,
And, dead to joy, forget my heart to beat !

Should fate command me to the farthest verge
Of the green earth, to distant barbarous climes,
Rivers unknown to song ; where first the sun
Gilds Indian mountains, or his setting beam
Flames on the Atlantic isles ; 'tis nought to me :
Since God is ever present, ever felt,
In the void waste as in the city full ;
And where He vital breathes there must be joy.
When even at last the solemn hour shall come,
And wing my mystic flight to future worlds,
I cheerful will obey ; there, with new powers,
Will rising wonders sing : I cannot go
Where Universal Love not smiles around,
Sustaining all yon orbs, and all their suns ;
From seeming Evil still educing Good,
And better thence again, and better still,
In infinite progression. But I lose
Myself in Him, in Light Ineffable !
Come then, expressive Silence, muse His praise.

THE CASTLE OF INDOLENCE.

An Allegorical Poem.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS Poem being writ in the manner of Spenser, the obsolete words, and a simplicity of diction in some of the lines, which border on the ludicrous, were necessary to make the imitation more perfect. And the style of that admirable poet, as well as the measure in which he wrote, are, as it were, appropriated by custom to all allegorical poems written in our language; just as in French the style of Marot, who lived under Francis I., has been used in tales and familiar epistles by the politest writers in the age of Lewis XIV.

EXPLANATION OF THE OBSOLETE WORDS USED IN THIS POEM.

<i>Archimage</i> , the chief or greatest of magicians or enchanters.	<i>Idless</i> , idleness.	<i>Soot</i> , sweet, or sweetly.
<i>Apaid</i> , paid.	<i>Imp</i> , child or offspring; from the Saxon impan, to graft or plant.	<i>Sooth</i> , true, or truth.
<i>Appal</i> , affright.	<i>Kest</i> , for cast.	<i>Stound</i> , misfortune, pang.
<i>Atween</i> , between.	<i>Lad</i> , for led.	<i>Sweltry</i> , sultry, consuming with heat.
<i>Aye</i> , always.	<i>Lea</i> , a piece of land or meadow.	<i>Swink</i> , to labour.
<i>Bale</i> , sorrow, trouble, misfortune.	<i>Libbard</i> , leopard.	<i>Thrall</i> , slave.
<i>Benempt</i> , named.	<i>Lig</i> , to lie.	<i>Transmew'd</i> , transformed.
<i>Blazon</i> , painting, displaying.	<i>Lithe</i> , loose, lax.	<i>Unkempt</i> (Lat. incompustus), unadorned.
<i>Breme</i> , cold, raw.	<i>Losel</i> , a loose idle fellow.	<i>Vild</i> , vile.
<i>Carol</i> , to sing songs of joy.	<i>Louting</i> , bowing, bending.	<i>Ween</i> , to think, be of opinion.
<i>Caurus</i> , the north-east wind.	<i>Mell</i> , mingle.	<i>Weet</i> , to know; to weet, to wit.
<i>Certes</i> , certainly.	<i>Moe</i> , more.	<i>Whilom</i> , ere-while, formerly.
<i>Dan</i> , a word prefixed to names.	<i>Moil</i> , to labour.	<i>Wight</i> , man.
<i>Deftly</i> , skilfully.	<i>Mote</i> , might.	<i>Wis</i> , for <i>Wist</i> , to know, think, understand.
<i>Depainted</i> , painted.	<i>Muchel</i> or <i>Mochel</i> , much, great.	<i>Wonne</i> (a noun), dwelling.
<i>Drowsihead</i> , drowsiness.	<i>Nathless</i> , nevertheless.	<i>Wroke</i> , wreakt.
<i>Eath</i> , easy.	<i>Ne</i> , nor.	
<i>Eftsoons</i> , immediately, often, afterwards.	<i>Needments</i> , necessities.	
<i>Eke</i> , also.	<i>Nourstling</i> , a child that is nursed.	
<i>Fays</i> , fairies.	<i>Noyance</i> , harm.	
<i>Fone</i> , foes.	<i>Perdie</i> (Fr. par Dieu), an old oath.	
<i>Gear</i> or <i>Geer</i> , furniture, equipage, dress	<i>Prankt</i> , coloured, adorned gaily.	
<i>Glaive</i> , sword. (Fr.)	<i>Prick'd thro' the forest</i> , rode through the forest.	
<i>Glee</i> , joy, pleasure.	<i>Sear</i> , dry, burnt up.	
<i>Han</i> , have.	<i>Sheen</i> , bright, shining.	
<i>Hight</i> , named, called: and sometimes it is used for <i>is called</i> . See c. i. s. vii.	<i>Sicker</i> , sure, surely.	
	<i>Smackt</i> , savoured.	
		<i>Yblent</i> , or <i>blent</i> , blended, mingled.
		<i>Yborn</i> , born.
		<i>Yclad</i> , clad.
		<i>Ycleped</i> , called, named.
		<i>Yfere</i> , together.
		<i>Ymolten</i> , melted.
		<i>Yode</i> (preter tense of <i>yede</i>), went.

N.B.—The letter Y is frequently placed in the beginning of a word by Spenser, to lengthen it a syllable; and *en* at the end of a word for the same reason, as *withouten*, *casten*, &c.

CANTO I.

The castle hight of Indolence,
And its false luxury:
Where for a little time, alas!
We lived right jollily.

I.

O MORTAL man, who livest here by toil,
Do not complain of this thy hard estate ;
That like an emmet thou must ever moil,
Is a sad sentence of an ancient date ;
And, certes, there is for it reason great ;
For though sometimes it makes thee weep and wail,
And curse thy star, and early drudge and late,
Withouten that would come a heavier bale,
Loose life, unruly passions, and diseases pale.

II.

In lowly dale, fast by a river's side,
With woody hill o'er hill encompass'd round,
A most enchanting Wizard did abide,
Than whom a fiend more fell is nowhere found.
It was, I ween, a lovely spot of ground :
And there a season atween June and May,
Half pranked with spring, with summer half im-
brown'd,
A listless climate made, where, sooth to say,
No living wight could work, ne cared e'en for play.

III.

Was nought around but images of rest :
Sleep-soothing groves, and quiet lawns between ;
And flowery beds that slumbrous influence kest,
From poppies breathed ; and beds of pleasant
green,
Where never yet was creeping creature seen.
Meantime unnumber'd glittering streamlets play'd,
And hurled everywhere their waters sheen ;
That, as they bicker'd through the sunny glade,
Though restless still themselves, a lulling murmur
made.

IV.

Join'd to the prattle of the purling rills
Were heard the lowing herds along the vale,
And flocks loud bleating from the distant hills,
And vacant shepherds piping in the dale :
And, now and then, sweet Philomel would wail,
Or stock-doves plain amid the forest deep,
That drowsy rustled to the sighing gale ;
And still a coil the grasshopper did keep ;
Yet all these sounds yblent inclined all to sleep.

V.

Full in the passage of the vale, above,
A sable, silent, solemn forest stood,
Where nought but shadowy forms was seen to
As idless fancied in her dreaming mood. [move,
And up the hills, on either side, a wood
Of blackening pines, aye waving to and fro,
Sent forth a sleepy horror through the blood ;
And where this valley winded out below,
The murmuring main was heard, and scarcely heard,
to flow.

VI.

A pleasing land of drowsyhead it was,
Of dreams that wave before the half-shut eye ;
And of gay castles in the clouds that pass,
For ever flushing round a summer-sky :
There eke the soft Delights, that witchingly
Instil a wanton sweetness through the breast,
And the calm Pleasures always hover'd nigh ;
But whate'er smack'd of noyance, or unrest,
Was far, far off expell'd from this delicious nest.

VII.

The landscape such, inspiring perfect ease,
Where INDOLENCE (for so the wizard hight)
Close hid his castle 'mid embowering trees,
That half shut out the beams of Phoebus bright,
And made a kind of checker'd day and night ;
Meanwhile, unceasing at the massy gate,
Beneath a spacious palm, the wicked wight
Was placed ; and to his lute, of cruel fate
And labour harsh, complain'd, lamenting man's
estate.

VIII.

Thither continual pilgrims crowded still,
From all the roads of earth that pass thereby :
For, as they chanced to breathe on neighbouring
hill,
The freshness of this valley smote their eye,
And drew them ever and anon more nigh ;
Till clustering round the enchanter false they hung,
Ymolten with his syren melody ;
While o'er the enfeebling lute his hand he flung,
And to the trembling chords these tempting verses
sung :—

IX.

" Behold ! ye pilgrims of this earth, behold !
See all, but man, with unearn'd pleasure gay :
See her bright robes the butterfly unfold,
Broke from her wintry tomb in prime of May !
What youthful bride can equal her array ?
Who can with her for easy pleasure vie ?
From mead to mead with gentle wing to stray,
From flower to flower on balmy gales to fly,
Is all she has to do beneath the radiant sky.

X.

" Behold the merry minstrels of the morn,
The swarming songsters of the careless grove,
Ten thousand throats ! that, from the flowering
thorn,
Hymn their good God, and carol sweet of love,
Such grateful kindly raptures them emove :
They neither plough, nor sow ; ne, fit for flail,
E'er to the barn the nodden sheaves they drove ;
Yet theirs each harvest dancing in the gale,
Whatever crowns the hill, or smiles along the vale.

XI.

" Outcast of nature, man ! the wretched thrall
Of bitter dropping sweat, of sweltry pain,
Of cares that eat away the heart with gall,
And of the vices, an inhuman train,
That all proceed from savage thirst of gain :
For when hard-hearted Interest first began
To poison earth, Astrea left the plain ;
Guile, Violence, and Murder seized on man,
And, for soft milky streams, with blood the rivers
ran.

XII.

"Come, ye, who still the cumbrous load of life
Push hard up hill ; but as the farthest steep
You trust to gain, and put an end to strife,
Down thunders back the stone with mighty sweep,
And hurls your labours to the valley deep,
For ever vain : come, and withouten fee,
I in oblivion will your sorrows steep,
Your cares, your toils ; will steep you in a sea
Of full delight : O come, ye weary wights, to me !

XIII.

"With me, you need not rise at early dawn,
To pass the joyless day in various stounds ;
Or, louting low, on upstart Fortune fawn,
And sell fair honour for some paltry pounds ;
Or through the city take your dirty rounds,
To cheat, and dun, and lie, and visit pay,
Now flattering base, now giving secret wounds ;
Or prowling in courts of law for human prey,
In venal senate thieve, or rob on broad highway.

XIV.

"No cocks, with me, to rustic labour call,
From village on to village sounding clear ;
To tardy swain no shrill-voiced matrons squall ;
No dogs, no babes, no wives, to stun your ear ;
No hammers thump ; no horrid blacksmith sear,
No noisy tradesman your sweet slumbers start,
With sounds that are a misery to hear :
But all is calm, as would delight the heart
Of Sybarite of old, all nature, and all art.

XV.

"Here nought but candour reigns, indulgent ease,
Good-nature lounging, sauntering up and down :
They who are pleased themselves must always
On others' ways they neversquint a frown, [please ;
Nor heed what haps in hamlet or in town :
Thus, from the source of tender Indolence,
With milky blood the heart is overflown,
Is soothed and sweeten'd by the social sense ;
For Interest, Envy, Pride, and Strife are banish'd
hence.

XVI.

"What, what is virtue, but repose of mind,
A pure ethereal calm, that knows no storm,
Above the reach of wild Ambition's wind,
Above those passions that this world deform,
And torture man, a proud malignant worm ?
But here, instead, soft gales of passion play,
And gently stir the heart, thereby to form
A quicker sense of joy ; as breezes stray
Across the enliven'd skies, and make them still more
gay.

XVII.

"The best of men have ever loved repose :
They hate to mingle in the filthy fray ;
Where the soul sours, and gradual rancour grows,
Embitter'd more from peevish day to day.
Even those whom Fame has lent her fairest ray,
The most renown'd of worthy wights of yore,
From a base world at last have stolen away :
So Scipio, to the soft Cumæan shore
Retiring, tasted joy he never knew before.

XVIII.

"But if a little exercise you chuse,
Some zest for ease, 'tis not forbidden here :
Amid the groves you may indulge the Muse,
Or tend the blooms, and deck the vernal year ;
Or softly stealing, with your watery gear,
Along the brooks, the crimson-spotted fry
You may delude : the whilst, amused, you hear
Now the hoarse stream, and now the zephyr's sigh,
Attuned to the birds, and woodland melody.

XIX.

"O grievous folly ! to heap up estate,
Losing the days you see beneath the sun ;
When, sudden, comes blind unrelenting Fate,
And gives the untasted portion you have won
With ruthless toil, and many a wretch undone,
To those who mock you, gone to Pluto's reign,
There with sad ghosts to pine, and shadows dun :
But sure it is of vanities most vain,
To toil for what you here untoiling may obtain."

XX.

He ceased. But still their trembling ears retain'd
The deep vibrations of his witching song ;
That, by a kind of magic power, constrain'd
To enter in, pell-mell, the listening throng.
Heaps pour'd on heaps, and yet they slept along,
In silent ease ; as when beneath the beam
Of summer-moons, the distant woods among,
Or by some flood all silver'd with the gleam,
The soft-embodied fays through airy portal stream :

XXI.

By the smooth demon so it order'd was,
And here his baneful bounty first began :
Though some there were who would not further
And his alluring baits suspected han : [pass,
The wise distrust the too fair-spoken man.
Yet through the gate they cast a wishful eye :
Not to move on, perdie, is all they can :
For do their very best they cannot fly,
But often each way look, and often sorely sigh.

XXII.

When this the watchful wicked wizard saw,
With sudden spring he leap'd upon them straight :
And soon as touch'd by his unhallow'd paw,
They found themselves within the cursed gate ;
Full hard to be repass'd, like that of fate.
Not stronger were of old the giant crew,
Who sought to pull high Jove from regal state ;
Though feeble wretch he seem'd, of sallow hue :
Certain, who bides his grasp, will that encounter rue.

XXIII.

For whomso'er the villain takes in hand,
Their joints unknit, their sinews melt apace ;
As lithe they grow as any willow-wand,
And of their vanish'd force remains no trace :
So when a maiden fair, of modest grace,
In all her buxom blooming May of charms,
Is seized in some losel's hot embrace,
She waxeth very weakly, as she warms,
Then sighing yields her up to love's delicious
harms.

XXIV.

Waked by the crowd, slow from his bench arose
A comely, full-spread porter, swoln with sleep :
His calm, broad, thoughtless aspect breathed
And in sweet torpor he was plunged deep, [repose ;
Ne could himself from ceaseless yawning keep ;
While o'er his eyes the drowsy liquor ran, [peep :
Through which his half-waked soul would faintly
Then, taking his black staff, he call'd his man,
And roused himself as much as rouse himself he can.

XXV.

The lad leap'd lightly at his master's call :
He was, to weet, a little roguish page,
Save sleep and play who minded nought at all,
Like most the untaught striplings of his age.
This boy he kept each band to disengage,
Garters and buckles, task for him unfit,
But ill becoming his grave personage,
And which his portly paunch would not permit :
So this same limber page to all performed it.

XXVI.

Meantime, the master-porter wide display'd
Great store of caps, of slippers, and of gowns ;
Wherewith he those who enter'd in array'd,
Loose as the breeze that plays along the downs,
And waves the summer woods when evening frowns :
O fair undress, best dress ! it checks no vein,
But every flowing limb in pleasure drowns, [fain,
And heightens ease with grace. This done, right
Sir Porter sat him down, and turn'd to sleep again.

XXVII.

Thus easy robed, they to the fountain sped
That in the middle of the court up-threw
A stream, high spouting from its liquid bed,
And falling back again in drizzly dew ;
There each deep draughts, as deep he thirsted,
It was a fountain of nepenthe rare, [drew :
Whence, as Dan Homer sings, huge pleasure
And sweet oblivion of vile earthly care ; [grew,
Fair gladsome waking thoughts, and joyous dreams
more fair.

XXVIII.

This rite perform'd, all inly pleased and still,
Withouten pomp, was proclamation made :
" Ye sons of Indolence, do what you will ;
And wander where you list, through hall or glade ;
Be no man's pleasure for another staid ;
Let each as likes him best his hours employ,
And cursed be he whominds his neighbour's trade !
Here dwells kind Ease and unreprieving Joy :
He little merits bliss who others can annoy."

XXIX.

Straight of these endless numbers, swarming round,
As thick as idle notes in sunny ray,
Not one oftsoons in view was to be found,
But every man stroll'd off his own glad way,
Wide o'er this ample court's blank area,
With all the lodges that thereto pertain'd,
No living creature could be seen to stray ;
While solitude, and perfect silence reign'd ;
So that to think you dreamt you almost were con-
strain'd.

XXX.

As when a shepherd of the Hebrid-Isles*,
Placed far amid the melancholy main,
(Whether it be lone Fancy him beguiles ;
Or that ærial beings sometimes deign
To stand, embodied, to our senses plain)
Sees on the naked hill, or valley low,
The whilst in ocean Phœbus dips his wain,
A vast assembly moving to and fro :
Then all at once in air dissolves the wondrous show.

XXXI.

Ye gods of quiet, and of sleep profound !
Whose soft dominion o'er this castle sways,
And all the widely silent places round,
Forgive me, if my trembling pen displays
What never yet was sung in mortal lays.
But how shall I attempt such arduous string ?
I who have spent my nights, and nightly days,
In this soul-deadening place loose loitering :
Ah ! how shall I for this uprear my moulted wing ?

XXXII.

Come on, my Muse, nor stoop to low despair,
Thou imp of Jove, touch'd by celestial fire !
Thou yet shalt sing of war, and actions fair,
Which the bold sons of Britain will inspire ;
Of ancient bards thou yet shalt sweep the lyre ;
Thou yet shalt tread in tragic pall the stage,
Paint love's enchanting woes, the hero's ire,
The sage's calm, the patriot's noble rage,
Dashing Corruption down through every worthless
age.

XXXIII.

The doors, that knew no shrill alarming bell,
Ne cursed knocker plied by villain's hand,
Self-open'd into halls, where, who can tell
What elegance and grandeur wide expand ;
The pride of Turkey and of Persia land ?
Soft quilts on quilts, on carpets carpets spread,
And couches stretch'd around in seemly band ;
And endless pillows rise to prop the head ;
So that each spacious room was one full-swelling
bed ;

XXXIV.

And everywhere huge cover'd tables stood,
With wines high flavoured and rich viands crown'd,
Whatever sprightly juice or tasteful food
On the green bosom of this earth are found,
And all old Ocean 'genders in his round :
Some hand unseen these silently display'd,
Even undemanded by a sign or sound ;
You need but wish, and, instantly obey'd,
Fair rang'd the dishes rose, and thick the glasses
play'd.

XXXV.

Here freedom reign'd, without the least alloy ;
Nor gossip's tale, nor ancient maiden's gail,
Nor saintly spleen durst murmur at our joy,
And with envenom'd tongue our pleasures pall.
For why ? there was but one great rule for all ;
To wit, that each should work his own desire,
And eat, drink, study, sleep, as it may fall,
Or melt the time in love, or wake the lyre,
And carol what, unbid, the Muses might inspire.

* Those islands on the western coast of Scotland called the Hebrides.

XXXVI.

The rooms with costly tapestry were hung,
Where was inwoven many a gentle tale ;
Such as of old the rural poets sung,
Or of Arcadian or Sicilian vale :
Reclining lovers, in the lonely dale,
Pour'd forth at large the sweetly tortured heart ;
Or, sighing tender passion, swell'd the gale,
And taught charm'd Echo to resound their smart ;
While flocks, woods, streams around, repose and
peace impart.

XXXVII.

Those pleased the most, where, by a cunning hand,
Depainted was the patriarchal age ;
What time Dan Abra'am left the Chaldee land,
And pastured on from verdant stage to stage,
Where fields and fountains fresh could best engage.
Toil was not then : of nothing took they heed,
But with wild beasts the sylvan war to wage,
And o'er vast plains their herds and flocks to feed :
Bless'd sons of Nature they ! true golden age indeed.

XXXVIII.

Sometimes the pencil, in cool airy halls,
Bade the gay bloom of vernal landscapes rise,
Or Autumn's varied shades imbrown the walls :
Now the black tempest strikes the astonish'd eyes ;
Now down the steep the flashing torrent flies ;
The trembling sun now plays o'er ocean blue,
And now rude mountains frown amid the skies ;
Whate'er Lorraine light-touch'd with softening hue,
Or savage Rosa dash'd, or learned Poussin drew.

XXXIX.

Each sound too here to languishment inclined,
Lull'd the weak bosom, and induced ease :
Aërial music in the warbling wind,
At distance rising oft, by small degrees,
Nearer and nearer came, till o'er the trees
It hung, and breathed such soul-dissolving airs,
As did, alas ! with soft perdition please :
Entangled deep in its enchanting snares,
The listening heart forgot all duties and all cares.

XL.

A certain music, never known before,
Here lull'd the pensive, melancholy mind ;
Full easily obtain'd. Behoves no more,
But sidelong, to the gently waving wind,
To lay the well-tuned instrument reclined ;
From which, with airy-flying fingers light,
Beyond each mortal touch the most refined,
The god of winds drew sounds of deep delight :
Whence, with just cause, the harp of Æolus* it hight.

XLI.

Ah me ! what hand can touch the string so fine ?
Who up the lofty diapason roll
Such sweet, such sad, such solemn airs divine,
Then let them down again into the soul ?
Now rising love they fann'd ; now pleasing dole
They breathed, in tender musings, through the
And now a graver sacred strain they stole, [heart ;
As when seraphic hands a hymn impart :
Wild warbling nature all, above the reach of art !

* This is not an imagination of the author ; there being in fact such an instrument, called Æolus's harp, which, when placed against a little rushing or current of air, produces the effect here described.

XLII.

Such the gay splendour, the luxurious state,
Of caliphs old, who on the Tigris' shore,
In mighty Bagdat, populous and great,
Held their bright court, where was of ladies store ;
And verse, love, music, still the garland wore :
When Sleep was coy, the bard,* in waiting there,
Cheer'd the lone midnight with the Muse's lore ;
Composing music bade his dreams be fair,
And music lent new gladness to the morning air.

XLIII.

Near the pavilions where we slept, still ran
Soft tinkling streams, and dashing waters fell,
And sobbing breezes sigh'd, and oft began
(So work'd the wizard) wintry storms to swell,
As heaven and earth they would together melt :
At doors and windows threatening, seem'd to call
The demons of the tempest, growling fell,
Yet the least entrance found they none at all,
When sweeter grew our sleep, secure in massy hall.

XLIV.

And hither Morpheus sent his kindest dreams,
Raising a world of gayer tinct and grace,
O'er which were shadowy cast Elysian gleams,
That play'd in waving lights, from place to place,
And shed a roscate smile on Nature's face.
Not Titian's pencil e'er could so array,
So fleece with clouds the pure ethereal space ;
Ne could it e'er such melting forms display,
As loose on flowery beds all languishingly lay.

XLV.

No, fair illusions ! artful phantoms, no !
My Muse will not attempt your fairy land :
She has no colours that like you can glow :
To catch your vivid scenes too gross her hand.
But, sure it is, was ne'er a subtler band
Than these same guileful angel-seeming sprites,
Who thus in dreams voluptuous, soft, and bland,
Pour'd all the Arabian heaven upon our nights,
And bless'd them oft besides with more refined
delights.

XLVI.

They were, in sooth, a most enchanting train,
E'en feigning virtue ; skilful to unite
With evil good, and strew with pleasure pain.
But for those fiends, whom blood and broils delight,
Who hurl the wretch, as if to hell outright,
Down down black gulfs, where sullen waters sleep,
Or hold him clambering all the fearful night
On beetling cliffs, or pent in ruins deep ;
They, till due time should serve, were bid far hence
to keep.

XLVII.

Ye guardian spirits, to whom man is dear,
From these foul demons shield the midnight
Angels of fancy and of love, be near, [gloom :
And o'er the blank of sleep diffuse a bloom :
Evoke the sacred shades of Greece and Rome,
And let them virtue with a look impart :
But chief, awhile, O ! lend us from the tomb
Those long-lost friends for whom in love we smart,
And fill with pious awe and joy-mix'd woe the heart.

* The Arabian caliphs had poets among the officers of their court, whose office it was to do what is here mentioned.

XLVIII.

Or are you sportive?—Bid the morn of youth
Rise to new light, and beam afresh the days
Of innocence, simplicity, and truth;
To cares estranged, and manhood's thorny ways.
What transport, to retrace our boyish plays,
Our easy bliss, when each thing joy supplied;
The woods, the mountains, and the warbling maze
Of the wild brooks!—but, fondly wandering wide,
My Muse, resume the task that yet doth thee abide.

XLIX.

One great amusement of our household was,
In a huge crystal magic globe to spy,
Still as you turn'd it, all things that do pass
Upon this ant-hill earth, where constantly
Of idly busy men the restless fry
Run bustling to and fro with foolish haste,
In search of pleasures vain that from them fly;
Or which, obtain'd, the caitiffs dare not taste:
When nothing is enjoy'd, can there be greater waste?

L.

"Of vanity the mirrour," this was call'd:
Here you a muckworm of the town might see
At his dull desk, amid his ledgers stall'd,
Eat up with carking care and penury;
Most like to carcase parch'd on gallow-tree.
"A penny saved is a penny got:"
Firm to this scoundrel maxim keepeth he,
Ne of its rigour will he bate a jot,
Till it has quench'd his fire, and banished his pot.

LI.

Straight from the filth of this low grub, behold!
Comes fluttering forth a gaudy spendthrift heir,
All glossy gay, enamel'd all with gold,
The silly tenant of the summer air,
In folly lost, of nothing takes he care;
Pimps, lawyers, stewards, harlots, flatterers vile,
And thieving tradesmen him among them share:
His father's ghost from limbo lake, the while,
Sees this, which more damnation doth upon him pile.

LII.

This globe pourtray'd the race of learned men,
Still at their books, and turning o'er the page,
Backwards and forwards: oft they snatch the pen,
As if inspired, and in a Thespian rage;
Then write, and blot, as would your ruth engage;
Why, authors, all this scrawl and scribbling sore?
To lose the present, gain the future age,
Praised to be when you can hear no more,
And much enrich'd with fame, when useless worldly
store.

LIII.

Then would a splendid city rise to view,
With carts, and cars, and coaches roaring all:
Wide-pour'd abroad beheld the giddy crew:
See how they dash along from wall to wall!
At every door, hark how they thundering call!
Good lord! what can this giddy rout excite?
Why, on each other with fell tooth to fall,
A neighbour's fortune, fame or peace, to blight,
And make new tiresome parties for the coming
night.

LIV.

The puzzling sons of party next appear'd,
In dark cabals and nightly juntos met;
And now they whisper'd close, now shrugging
The important shoulder; then, as if to get
New light, their twinkling eyes were inward set.
No sooner Lucifer* recalls affairs,
Than forth they various rush in mighty fret;
When lo! push'd up to power, and crown'd their
In comes another set, and kicketh them down stairs.

LV.

But what most show'd the vanity of life
Was to behold the nations all on fire,
In cruel broils engaged, and deadly strife:
Most Christian kings, inflamed by black desire,
With honourable ruffians in their hire,
Cause war to rage, and blood around to pour;
Of this sad work when each begins to tire,
They sit them down just where they were before,
Till for new scenes of woe peace shall their force
restore.

LVI.

To number up the thousands dwelling here,
A useless were, and eke an endless task;
From kings, and those who at the helm appear,
To gipsies brown in summer-glades who bask.
Yea many a man, perdie, I could unmask,
Whose desk and table make a solemn show,
With tape-tied trash, and suits of fools that ask
For place or pension, laid in decent row;
But these I passen by, with nameless numbers moe.

LVII.

Of all the gentle tenants of the place,
There was a man of special grave remark;
A certain tender gloom o'erspread his face,
Pensive, not sad; in thought involved, not dark;
As soot this man could sing as morning lark,
And teach the noblest morals of the heart:
But these his talents were yburied stark;
Of the fine stores he nothing would impart,
Which or boon Nature gave, or nature-painting Art.

LVIII.

To noon-tide shades incontinent he ran,
Where purls the brook with sleep-inviting sound;
Or when Dan Sol to slope his wheels began,
Amid the broom he bask'd him on the ground,
Where the wild thyme and camomile are found:
There would he linger, till the latest ray
Of light sat trembling on the welkin's bound; [stray,
Then homeward through the twilight shadows
Sauntering and slow. So had he passed many a day!

LIX.

Yet not in thoughtless slumber were they pass'd;
For oft the heavenly fire, that lay conceal'd
Beneath the sleeping embers, mounted fast,
And all its native light anew reveal'd:
Oft as he traversed the cerulean field,
And mark'd the clouds that drove before the wind,
Ten thousand glorious systems would he build,
Ten thousand great ideas fill'd his mind; [hind.
But with the clouds they fled, and left no trace be-

* The morning star.

LX.

With him was sometimes join'd, in silent walk,
 (Profoundly silent, for they never spoke)
 One* shy'er still, who quite detested talk :
 Oft, stung by spleen, at once away he broke,
 To groves of pine, and broad o'ershadowing oak ;
 There, inly thrill'd, he wander'd all alone,
 And on himself his pensive fury wroke,
 Ne ever utter'd word, save when first shone
 The glittering star of eve—"Thank heaven! the day
 is done."

LXI.

Here lurk'd a wretch, who had not crept abroad
 For forty years, ne face of mortal seen ;
 In chamber brooding like a loathly toad :
 And sure his linen was not very clean.
 Through secret loop-holes, that had practised been
 Near to his bed, his dinner vile he took ;
 Unkempt, and rough, of squalid face and mien,
 Our Castle's shame! whence, from his filthy nook,
 We drove the villain out, for fitter lair to look.

LXII.

One day there chanced into these halls to rove
 A joyous youth, who took you at first sight ;
 Him the wild wave of pleasure hither drove,
 Before the sprightly tempest tossing light :
 Certes, he was a most engaging wight,
 Of social glee, and wit humane though keen,
 Turning the night to day and day to night :
 For him the merry bells had rung, I ween,
 If, in this nook of quiet, bells had ever been.

LXIII.

But not e'en pleasure to excess is good :
 What most elates, then sinks the soul as low :
 When springtide joy pours in with copious flood,
 The higher still the exulting billows flow,
 The farther back again they flagging flow,
 And leave us groveling on the dreary shore :
 Taught by this son of joy, we found it so,
 Who, whilst he stay'd, kept in a gay uproar
 Our madden'd Castle all, the abode of sleep no more.

LXIV.

As when in prime of June a burnish'd fly,
 Sprung from the meads, o'er which he sweeps along,
 Cheer'd by the breathing bloom and vital sky,
 Tunes up amid these airy halls his song,
 Soothing at first the gay reposing throng :
 And oft he sips their bowl ; or, nearly drown'd,
 He, thence recovering, drives their beds among,
 And scares their tenders sleep, with trump profound ;
 Then out again he flies, to wing his mazy round.

LXV.

Another guest† there was, of sense refined,
 Who felt each worth, for every worth he had ;
 Serene yet warm, humane yet firm his mind,
 As little touch'd as any man's with bad ;
 Him through their inmost walks the Muses lad,
 To him the sacred love of nature lent,
 And sometimes would he make our valley glad ;
 When as we found he would not here be pent,
 To him the better sort this friendly message sent :

* Conjecture has applied this to Dr. Armstrong the poet.

† George Lord Lyttleton.

LXVI.

"Come, dwell with us ! true son of Virtue, come !
 But if, alas ! we cannot thee persuade
 To lie content beneath our peaceful dome,
 Ne ever more to quit our quiet glade ;
 Yet when at last thy toils but ill apaid
 Shall dead thy fire, and damp its heavenly spark,
 Thou wilt be glad to seek the rural shade,
 There to indulge the Muse, and nature mark :
 We then a lodge for thee will rear in Hagley Park."

LXVII.

Here whilom ligg'd the Esopus* of the age ;
 But call'd by fame, in soul ypricked deep,
 A noble pride restored him to the stage,
 And roused him like a giant from his sleep.
 Even from his slumbers we advantage reap :
 With double force the enliven'd scene he wakes,
 Yet quits not nature's bounds. He knows to keep
 Each due decorum : now the heart he shakes,
 And now with well-urged sense the enlighten'd
 judgment takes.

LXVIII.

A bard here dwelt, more fat than bard beseems ;
 Who void of envy, guile, and lust of gain†,
 On virtue still, and nature's pleasing themes,
 Pour'd forth his unpremeditated strain :
 The world forsaking with a calm disdain,
 Here laugh'd he careless in his easy seat ;
 Here quaff'd encircled with the joyous train,
 Oft moralizing sage : his ditty sweet
 He loathed much to write, ne cared to repeat.

LXIX.

Full off by holy feet our ground was trod,
 Of clerks good plenty here you mote espy.
 A little, round, fat, oily man‡ of God,
 Was one I chiefly mark'd among the fry :
 He had a roguish twinkle in his eye,
 And shone all glittering with ungodly dew,
 If a tight damsel chanced to trippen by ;
 Which when observed, he shrunk into his mew,
 And straight would recollect his piety anew.

LXX.

Nor be forgot a tribe, who minded nought
 (Old inmates of the place) but state affairs :
 They look'd, perdie, as if they deeply thought,
 And on their brow sat every nation's cares ;
 The world by them is parcel'd out in shares,
 When in the Hall of Smoke they congress
 hold,
 And the sage berry sun-burnt Mocha bears
 Has clear'd their inward eye : then, smoke-
 enroll'd,
 Their oracles break forth, mysterious as of old.

* Mr. Quin.

† The following lines of this stanza were written by a friend of the author (since understood to have been Lord Lyttleton), and were designed to portray the character of Thomson.

‡ The Rev. Mr. Murdoch, Thomson's friend and biographer.

LXXI.

Here languid Beauty kept her pale-faced court :
 Beves of dainty dames, of high degree,
 From every quarter thither made resort ;
 Where, from gross mortal care and business free,
 They lay pour'd out in ease and luxury.
 Or should they a vain show of work assume,
 Alas ! and well-a-day ! what can it be ?
 To knot, to twist, to range the vernal bloom ;
 But far is cast the distaff, spinning-wheel, and loom.

LXXII.

Their only labour was to kill the time
 (And labour dire it is, and weary woe ;)
 They sit, they loll, turn o'er some idle rhyme ;
 Then, rising sudden, to the glass they go,
 Or saunter forth, with tottering step and slow :
 This soon too rude an exercise they find ;
 Straight on the couch their limbs again they throw,
 Where hours on hours they sighing lie reclined,
 And court the vapoury god, soft breathing in the wind.

LXXIII.

On enymph there was, methought, in bloom of May,
 On whom the idle Fiend glanced many a look,
 In hopes to lead her down the slippery way
 To taste of Pleasure's deep deceitful brook :
 No virtues yet her gentle mind forsook :
 No idle whims, no vapours fill'd her brain ;
 But Prudence for her youthful guide she took,
 And Goodness, which no earthly vice could stain,
 Dwelt in her mind ; she was ne proud, I ween, or vain.

LXXIV.

Now must I mark the villany we found,
 But ah ! too late, as shall eftsoons be shown.
 A place here was, deep, dreary, under ground ;
 Where still our inmates when unpleasing grown,
 Diseased, and loathsome, privily were thrown :
 Far from the light of heaven, they languish'd there,
 Unpitied uttering many a bitter groan ;
 For of these wretches taken was no care :
 Fierce fiends, and hags of hell, their only nurses were.

LXXV.

Alas ! the change ! from scenes of joy and rest,
 To this dark den, where sickness toss'd alway.
 Here Lethargy, with deadly sleep oppress'd,
 Stretch'd on his back, a mighty lubbard, lay,
 Heaving his sides, and snored night and day ;
 To stir him from his trance it was not eath,
 And his half-open'd eyne he shut straightway ;
 He led, I wot, the softest way to death,
 And taught withouten pain and strife to yield the breath.

LXXVI.

Of limbs enormous, but withal unsound,
 Soft-swoln and pale, here lay the Hydropsy :
 Unwieldy man, with belly monstrous round,
 For ever fed with watery supply ;
 For still he drank, and yet he still was dry.
 And moping here did Hypochondria sit,
 Mother of Spleen, in robes of various dye,
 Who vexed was full oft with ugly fit ;
 And some her frantic deem'd, and some her deem'd
 2 wit.

LXXVII.

A lady proud she was of ancient blood,
 Yet oft her fear her pride made crouchen low :
 She felt, or fancied in her fluttering mood,
 All the diseases which the spittles know,
 And sought all physick which the shops bestow,
 And still new leeches and new drugs would try,
 Her humour ever wavering to and fro : [cry,
 For sometimes she would laugh and sometimes
 Then sudden waxed wroth, and all she knew not why.

LXXVIII.

Fast by her side a listless maiden pined,
 With aching head and squeamish heart-burnings ;
 Pale, bloated, cold, she seem'd to hate mankind,
 Yet loved in secret all forbidden things.
 And here the Tertian shakes his chilling wings ;
 The sleepless Gout here counts the crowing cocks,
 A wolf now gnaws him, now a serpent stings ;
 Whilst Apoplexy cramm'd Intemperance knocks
 Down to the ground at once as butcher felleth ox *.

CANTO II.

The Knight of Arts and Industry,
 And his achievements fair,
 That by this Castle's overthrow,
 Secured, and crowned were.

I.

ESCAPED the castle of the sire of sin,
 Ah ! where shall I so sweet a dwelling find ?
 For all around, without, and all within,
 Nothing save what delightful was and kind,
 Of goodness savouring and a tender mind,
 E'er rose to view. But now another strain,
 Of doleful note, alas ! remains behind :
 I now must sing of pleasure turn'd to pain,
 And of the false enchanter INDOLENCE complain.

II.

Is there no patron to protect the Muse,
 And fence for her Parnassus' barren soil ?
 To every labour its reward accrues,
 And they are sure of bread who swink and toil ;
 But a fell tribe the Aonian hive despoil,
 As ruthless wasps oft rob the painful bee :
 Thus while the laws not guard that noblest toil,
 Ne for the Muses other meed decree,
 They praised are alone, and starve right merrily.

III.

I care not, Fortune, what you me deny :
 You cannot rob me of free Nature's grace :
 You cannot shut the windows of the sky,
 Through which Aurora shows her brightening
 You cannot bar my constant feet to trace [face ;
 The woods and lawns, by living stream, at eve :
 Let health my nerves and finer fibres brace,
 And I their toys to the great children leave :
 Of fancy, reason, virtue, nought can me bereave.

* These four concluding stanzas were claimed by Dr. Armstrong, and inserted in his "Miscellanies."

IV.

Come then, my Muse, and raise a bolder song ;
 Come lig no more upon the bed of sloth,
 Dragging the lazy languid line along,
 Fond to begin, but still to finish loth,
 Thy half-writ scrolls all eaten by the moth :
 Arise, and sing that generous imp of fame,
 Who, with the sons of Softness nobly wroth,
 To sweep away this human lumber came,
 Or in a chosen few to rouse the slumbering flame.

V.

In Fairy Land there lived a knight of old,
 Of feature stern, Selvaggio well yclep'd,
 A rough unpolish'd man, robust and bold,
 But wondrous poor : he neither sow'd nor reap'd,
 Ne stores in summer for cold winter heap'd ;
 In hunting all his days away he wore ;
 Now scorched by June, now in November steep'd,
 Now pinch'd by biting January sore,
 He still in woods pursued the libbard and the boar.

VI.

As he one morning, long before the dawn,
 Prick'd through the forest to dislodge his prey,
 Deep in the winding bosom of a lawn,
 With wood wild-fringed, he mark'd a taper's ray,
 That from the beating rain and wintry fray,
 Did to a lonely cot his steps decoy ;
 There, up to earn the needments of the day,
 He found dame Poverty, nor fair nor coy :
 Her he compress'd, and fill'd her with a lusty boy.

VII.

Amid the greenwood shade this boy was bred,
 And grew at last a knight of muchel fame,
 Of active mind and vigorous lustyhed,
 The Knight of Arts and Industry by name :
 Earth was his bed, the boughs his roof did frame ;
 He knew no beverage but the flowing stream ;
 His tasteful well-earn'd food the sylvan game,
 Or the brown fruit with which the woodlands teem :
 The same to him glad summer, or the winter breme.

VIII.

So pass'd his youthly morning, void of care,
 Wild as the colts that through the commons run :
 For him no tender parents troubled were ;
 He of the forest seem'd to be the son,
 And, certes, had been utterly undone,
 But that Minerva pity of him took,
 With all the gods that love the rural wonne,
 That teach to tame the soil and rule the crook ;
 Ne did the sacred Nine disdain a gentle look.

IX.

Of fertile genius, him they nurtured well,
 In every science, and in every art,
 By which mankind the thoughtless brutes excel,
 That can or use, or joy, or grace impart,
 Disclosing all the powers of head and heart :
 Ne were the goodly exercises spared,
 That brace the nerves, or make the limbs alert,
 And mix elastic force with firmness hard :
 Was never knight on ground mote be with him
 compared.

X.

Sometimes, with early dawn, he mounted gay,
 The hunter steed, exulting o'er the dale,
 And drew the roseate breath of orient day ;
 Sometimes retiring to the secret vale,
 Yclad in steel, and bright with burnish'd mail,
 He strain'd the bow, or toss'd the sounding spear,
 Or, darting on the goal, outstripp'd the gale,
 Or wheel'd the chariot in its mid career,
 Or strenuous wrestled hard with many a tough
 compeer.

XI.

At other times he pried through Nature's store,
 Whate'er she in the ethereal round contains,
 Whate'er she hides beneath her verdant floor,
 The vegetable and the mineral reigns ;
 Or else he scann'd the globe, those small domains,
 Where restless mortals such a turmoil keep,
 Its seas, its floods, its mountains, and its plains :
 But more he search'd the mind, and roused from
 sleep
 Those moral seeds whence we heroic actions reap.

XII.

Nor would he scorn to stoop from high pursuits
 Of heavenly Truth, and practise what she taught :
 Vain is the tree of knowledge without fruits !
 Sometimes in hand the spade or plough he caught,
 Forth calling all with which boon earth is fraught ;
 Sometimes he plied the strong mechanic tool,
 Or rear'd the fabric from the finest draught ;
 And oft he put himself to Neptune's school,
 Fighting with winds and waves on the vex'd ocean
 pool.

XIII.

To solace then these rougher toils, he tri'd
 To touch the kindling canvass into life ;
 With nature his creating pencil vied,
 With nature joyous at the mimic strife :
 Or, to such shapes as graced Pygmalion's wife,
 He hew'd the marble ; or, with varied fire,
 He roused the trumpet, and the martial life,
 Or baded the lute sweet tenderness inspire,
 Or verses framed that well might wake Apollo's
 lyre.

XIV.

Accomplish'd thus, he from the woods issued,
 Full of great aims, and bent on bold emprise ;
 The work, which long he in his breast had brew'd,
 Now to perform he ardent did devise ;
 To wit, a barbarous world to civilize.
 Earth was till then a boundless forest wild ;
 Nought to be seen but savage wood and skies ;
 No cities nourish'd arts, no culture smiled,
 No government, no laws, no gentle manners mild.

XV.

A rugged wight, the worst of brutes, was man :
 On his own wretched kind he, ruthless, prey'd :
 The strongest still the weakest overran ;
 In every country mighty robbers sway'd,
 And guile and ruffian force were all their trade.
 Life was a scene of rapine, want, and woe ;
 Which this brave knight, in noble anger, made
 To swear he would the rascal rout o'erthrow,
 For, by the powers divine, it should no more be so !

xvi.

It would exceed the purport of my song,
To say how this best sun, from orient climes,
Came beaming life and beauty all along,
Before him chasing indolence and crimes.
Still as he pass'd the nations he sublimed,
And calls forth arts and virtues with his ray :
Then Egypt, Greece, and Rome, their golden times
Successive had ; but now in ruins grey
They lie, to slavish sloth and tyranny a prey.

xvii.

To crown his toils, Sir Industry then spread
The swelling sail, and made for Britain's coast.
A sylvan life till then the natives led,
In the brown shades and green-wood forest lost,
All careless rambling where it liked them most :
Their wealth the wild deer bouncing through the
glade ;
They lodged at large, and lived at Nature's cost ;
Save spear and bow, withouten other aid ;
Yet not the Roman steel their naked breast dismay'd.

xviii.

He liked the soil, he liked the clement skies,
He liked the verdant hills and flowery plains :
" Be this my great, my chosen isle," he cries,
" This, whilst my labours Liberty sustains,
This queen of ocean all assault disdains."
Nor liked he less the genius of the land,
To freedom apt and persevering pains,
Mild to obey, and generous to command,
Temper'd by forming Heaven with kindest, firmest
hand.

xix.

Here, by degrees, his master-work arose,
Whatever arts and industry can frame :
Whatever finish'd Agriculture knows,
Fair queen of arts ! from heaven itself who came,
When Eden flourish'd in unspotted fame :
And still with her sweet Innocence we find,
And tender Peace, and joys without a name,
That while they ravish, tranquillise the mind :
Nature and art at once, delight and use combined.

xx.

Then towns he quicken'd by mechanic arts,
And bade the fervent city glow with toil ;
Bade social commerce raise renowned marts,
Join land to land, and marry soil to soil ;
Unite the poles, and without bloody spoil
Bring home of either Ind the gorgeous stores ;
Or, should despotic rage the world embroil,
Bade tyrants tremble on remotest shores,
While o'er the encircling deep Britannia's thunder
roars.

xxi.

The drooping Muses then he westward call'd
From the famed city* by Propontic Sea,
What time the Turk the enfeebled Grecian thrall'd ;
Thence from their cloister'd walks he set them
And brought them to another Castalie, [free,
Where Isis many a famous nursing breeds ;
Or where old Cain soft-paces o'er the lea
In pensive mood, and tunes his Doric reeds,
The whilst his flocks at large the lonely shepherd
feeds.

* Constantinople.

xxii.

Yet the fine arts were what he finish'd least.
For why ? They are the quintessence of all,
The growth of labouring time, and slow increased ;
Unless, as seldom chances, it should fall
That mighty patrons the coy sisters call
Up to the sunshine of uncumber'd ease,
Where no rude care the mounting thought may
thrall,
And where they nothing have to do but please :
Ah ! gracious God ! thou know'st they ask no other
fees.

xxiii.

But now, alas ! we live too late in time :
Our patrons now even grudge that little claim,
Except to such as seek the soothing rhyme ;
And yet, forsooth, they wear Mæcenas' name,
Poor sons of puffed-up vanity, not fame.
Unbroken spirits, cheer ! still, still remains
The eternal patron, Liberty ; whose flame,
While she protects, inspires the noblest strains :
The best and sweetest far, are toil-created gains.

xxiv.

When as the knight had framed, in Britain-land,
A matchless form of glorious government,
In which the sovereign laws alone command,
Laws 'stablish'd by the public free consent,
Whose majesty is to the sceptre lent ;
When this great plan, with each dependent art,
Was settled firm, and to his heart's content,
Then sought he from the toilsome scene to part,
And let life's vacant eve breathe quiet through the
heart.

xxv.

For this he chose a farm in Deva's vale,
Where his long alleys peep'd upon the main :
In this calm seat he drew the healthful gale ;
Here mix'd the chief, the patriot, and the swain.
The happy monarch of his sylvan train,
Here, sided by the guardians of the fold,
He walk'd his rounds, and cheer'd his blest domain.
His days, the days of unstain'd nature, roll'd
Replete with peace and joy, like patriarchs' of
old.

xxvi.

Witness, ye lowing herds, who gave him milk,
Witness, ye flocks, whose woolly vestments far
Exceed soft India's cotton, or her silk ;
Witness, with Autumn charged the nodding ear,
That homeward came beneath sweet evening's star,
Or of September-moons the radiance mild.
O hide thy head, abominable War !
Of crimes and ruffian idleness the child !
From Heaven this life ysprung, from hell thy
glories vild !

xxvii.

Nor from this deep retirement banish'd was
The amusing care of rural industry.
Still, as with grateful change the seasons pass,
New scenes arise, new landscapes strike the eye,
And all the enliven'd country beautify :
Gay plains extend where marshes slept before ;
O'er recent meads the exulting streamlets fly ;
Dark frowning heaths grow bright with Ceres'
store,
And woods imbrown the steep, or wave along the
shore.

XXVIII.

As nearer to his farm you made approach,
 He polish'd Nature with a finer hand :
 Yet on her beauties durst not Art enroach ;
 'Tis Art's alone these beauties to expand.
 In graceful dance immingled, o'er the land,
 Pan, Pales, Flora, and Pomona play'd :
 Here, too, brisk gales the rude wild common fann'd,
 A happy place, where free, and unafraid,
 Amid the flowering brakes each cower creature
 stray'd.

XXIX.

But in prime vigour what can last for aye ?
 That soul-enfeebling wizard, Indolence,
 I whilom sung, wrought in his works decay :
 Spread far and wide was his cursed influence ;
 Of public virtue much he dull'd the sense,
 Even much of private ; ate our spirit out,
 And fed our rank luxurious vices : whence
 The land was overlaid with many a lout ;
 Not, as old Fame reports, wise, generous, bold, and
 stout.

XXX.

A rage of pleasure madden'd every breast ;
 Down to the lowest lees the ferment ran ;
 To his licentious wish each must be bless'd,
 With joy be fever'd, snatch it as he can.
 Thus Vice the standard rear'd ; her arrier-ban
 Corruption call'd, and loud she gave the word,
 " Mind, mind yourselves ! why should the vulgar
 man,
 The lacquey be more virtuous than his lord ?
 Enjoy this span of life ! 'tis all the gods afford."

XXXI.

The tidings reach'd to where, in quiet hall,
 The good old knight enjoy'd well-earn'd repose :
 " Come, come, Sir Knight ! thy children on thee call ;
 Come, save us yet, ere ruin round us close !
 The demon Indolence thy toils o'erthrows."
 On this the noble colour stain'd his cheeks,
 Indignant, glowing through the whitening snows
 Of venerable eld ; his eye full speaks
 His ardent soul, and from his couch at once he
 breaks.

XXXII.

" I will," he cried, " so help me, God ! destroy
 That villain Archimage."—His page then straight
 He to him call'd, a fiery-footed boy,
 Benempt Despatch :—" My steed be at the gate ;
 My bard attend ; quick bring the net of fate."
 This net was twisted by the Sisters three,
 Which, when once cast o'er harden'd wretch, too
 Repentance comes ; replevy cannot be [late
 From the strong iron grasp of vengeful Destiny.

XXXIII.

He came, the bard, a little Druid wight,
 Of wither'd aspect ; but his eye was keen,
 With sweetness mix'd. In russet brown bedight,
 As is his sister* of the corpses green,
 He crept along, unpromising of mien.
 Gross he who judges so. His soul was fair,
 Bright as the children of yon azure sheen !
 True comeliness, which nothing can impair,
 Dwells in the mind : all else is vanity and glare.

* The nightingale.

XXXIV.

" Come," quoth the knight, " a voice has reach'd
 The demon Indolence threats overthrow [mine ear :
 To all that to mankind is good and dear :
 Come, Philomelus, let us instant go,
 O'erturn his bowers, and lay his castle low.
 Those men, those wretched men, who will be slaves,
 Must drink a bitter wrathful cup of woe :
 But some there be, thy song, as from their graves,
 Shall raise. Thrice happy he ! who without rigour
 saves !"

XXXV.

Issuing forth, the knight bestrode his steed,
 Of ardent bay, and on whose front a star
 Shone blazing bright : sprung from the generous
 That whirl of active day the rapid car, [breed
 He pranced along, disdaining gate or bar.
 Meantime, the bard on milk-white palfrey rode,
 An honest sober beast, that did not mar
 His meditations, but full softly trode ;
 And much they moralised as thus yfere they yode.

XXXVI.

They talk'd of virtue and of human bliss.
 What else so fit for man to settle well ?
 And still their long researches met in this,
 This truth of truths, which nothing can refel :
 " From virtue's fount the purest joys outwell,
 Sweet rills of thought that cheer the conscious
 soul ;
 While vice pours forth the troubled streams of hell,
 The which, howe'er disguised, at last with dole
 Will, through the tortured breast, their fiery torrent
 roll."

XXXVII.

At length it dawn'd, that fatal valley gay,
 O'er which high wood-crown'd hills their summits
 On the cool height awhile our palmers stay, [rear ;
 And spite e'en of themselves their senses cheer ;
 Then to the wizard's wounne their steps they steer.
 Like a green isle, it broad beneath them spread,
 With gardens round, and wandering currents clear,
 And tufted groves to shade the meadow bed,
 Sweet airs and song ; and without hurry all seem'd
 glad.

XXXVIII.

" As God shall judge me, knight, we must forgive
 (The half-enraptured Philomelus cried)
 The frail good man deluded here to live,
 And in these groves his musing fancy hide.
 Ah ! nought is pure. It cannot be denied,
 That virtue still some tincture has of vice,
 And vice of virtue. What should then betide,
 But that our charity be not too nice ?
 Come, let us those we can to real bliss entice."

XXXIX.

" Ay, sicker," quoth the knight, " all flesh is frail,
 To pleasant sin and joyous dalliance bent ;
 But let not brutish Vice of this avail,
 And think to 'scape deserved punishment.
 Justice were cruel weakly to relent ;
 From Mercy's self she got her sacred glaive :
 Grace be to those who can, and will, repent ;
 But penance long, and dreary, to the slave,
 Who must in floods of fire his gross foul spirit
 lave."

XL.

Thus, holding high discourse, they came to where
The cursed carle was at his wonted trade ;
Still tempting heedless men into his snare,
In witching wise, as I before have said.
But when he saw, in goodly gear array'd,
The grave majestic knight approaching nigh,
And by his side the bard so sage and staid,
His countenance fell ; yet off his anxious eye
Mark'd them, like wily fox who roosted cock doth
spy.

XLI.

Nathless, with feign'd respect, he bade give back
The rabble rout, and welcomed them full kind ;
Struck with the noble train, they were not slack
His orders to obey, and fall behind.
Then he resumed his song ; and unconfin'd
Pour'd all his music, ran through all his strings :
With magic dust their eyne he tries to blind,
And virtue's tender airs o'er weakness flings.
What pity base his song who so divinely sings !

XLII.

Elate in thought, he counted them his own,
They listen'd so intent with fix'd delight :
But they instead, as if transmew'd to stone,
Marvel'd he could with such sweet art unite
The lights and shades of manners, wrong and right.
Meantime, the silly crowd the charm devour,
Woe pressing to the gate. Swift on the knight
He darted fierce, to drag him to his bower,
Who backening shunn'd his touch, for well he knew
its power.

XLIII.

As in throng'd amphitheatre of old
The wary Retiarius * trapp'd his foe,
Even so the knight, returning on him bold,
At once involved him in the Net of Woe
Whereof I mention made not along ago.
Enraged at first, he scorn'd so weak a jail,
And leap'd, and flew, and flounced, to and fro :
But, when he found that nothing could avail,
He sat him felly down, and gnaw'd his bitter nail.

XLIV.

Alarm'd, the inferior demons of the place
Raised rueful shrieks and hideous yells around ;
Black stormy clouds deform'd the welkin's face,
And from beneath was heard a wailing sound,
As of infernal sprites in cavern bound ;
A solemn sadness every creature strook,
And lightnings flash'd, and horror rock'd the
ground : [look,
Huge crowds on crowds outpour'd with blemish'd
As if on time's last verge this frame of things had
shook.

XLV.

Soon as the short-lived tempest was yspent,
Steam'd from the jaws of vex'd Avernus' hole,
And hush'd the hubbub of the rabblement,
Sir Industry the first calm moment stole :
" There must," he cried, " amid so vast a shoal,
Be some who are not tainted at the heart,
Not poison'd quite by this same villain's bowl :
Come then, my bard, thy heavenly fire impart ;
Touch soul with soul, till forth the latent spirit start."

* A gladiator, who made use of a net, which he threw
over his adversary.

XLVI.

The bard obey'd ; and taking from his side,
Where it in seemly sort depending hung,
His British harp, its speaking strings he tried,
The which with skilful touch he deftly strung,
Till tinkling in clear symphony they rung.
Then, as he felt the Muses come along,
Light o'er the chords his raptur'd hand he flung,
And play'd a prelude to his rising song :
The whilst, like midnight mute, ten thousands round
him throng.

XLVII.

Thus, ardent, burst his strain : " Ye hapless race,
Dire labouring here to smother Reason's ray,
That lights our Maker's image in our face,
And gives us wide o'er earth unquestion'd sway,
What is the adored Supreme Perfection, say ?
What, but eternal never-resting soul,
Almighty power, and all-directing day ;
By whom each atom stirs, the planets roll ;
Who fills, surrounds, informs, and agitates the
whole ?

XLVIII.

" Come, to the beaming God your hearts unfold !
Draw from its fountain life ! 'Tis thence, alone,
We can excel. Up from unfeeling mould,
To seraphs burning round the Almighty's throne,
Life rising still on life, in higher tone,
Perfection forms, and with perfection bliss.
In universal nature this clear shown,
Not needeth proof ; to prove it were, I wis,
To prove the beauteous world excels the brute abyss.

XLIX.

" Is not the field, with lively culture green,
A sight more joyous than the dead morass ?
Do not the skies, with active ether clean,
And fann'd by sprightly zephyrs, far surpass
The foul November fogs and slumbrous mass
With which sad Nature veils her drooping face ?
Does not the mountain stream, as clear as glass,
Gay-dancing on, the putrid pool disgrace ?
The same in all holds true, but chief in human race.

L.

" It was not by vile loitering in ease,
That Greece obtain'd the brighter palm of art ;
That soft yet ardent Athens learn'd to please,
To keen the wit, and to sublime the heart,
In all supreme ! complete in every part !
It was not thence majestic Rome arose,
And o'er the nations shook her conquering
dart :
For sluggard's brow the laurel never grows ;
Renown is not the child of indolent Repose.

LI.

" Had unambitious mortals minded nought,
But in loose joy their time to wear away ;
Had they alone the lap of Dalliance sought,
Pleased on her pillow their dull heads to lay,
Rude nature's state had been our state to-day ;
No cities e'er their towery fronts had raised,
No arts had made us opulent and gay ;
With brother-brutes the human race had grazed ;
None e'er had soar'd to fame, none honour'd been,
none praised.

LII.

"Great Homer's song had never fired the breast
To thirst of glory and heroic deeds ;
Sweet Maro's muse, sunk in inglorious rest,
Had silent slept amid the Mincian reeds ;
The wits of modern time had told their beads,
And monkish legends been their only strains ;
Our Milton's Eden had lain wrapt in weeds,
Our Shakspeare stroll'd and laugh'd with Warwick
swains,
Ne had my master Spenser charm'd his Mulla's
plains.

LIII.

"Dumb'too had been the sage historic muse,
And perish'd all the sons of ancient Fame ;
Those starry lights of virtue, that diffuse
Through the dark depth of time their vivid flame,
Had all been lost with such as have no name.
Who then had scorn'd his ease for others' good ?
Who then had toil'd rapacious men to tame ?
Who in the public breach devoted stood,
And for his country's cause been prodigal of blood ?

LIV.

"But, should to fame your hearts unfeeling be,
If right I read, you pleasure all require :
Then hear how best may be obtain'd this fee,
How best enjoy'd this nature's wide desire.
Toil and be glad ! let Industry inspire
Into your quicken'd limbs her buoyant breath !
Who does not act is dead ; absorpt entire
In my sloth, no pride, no joy he hath :
O leaden-hearted men, to be in love with death !

LV.

"Ah ! what avail the largest gifts of Heaven,
When drooping health and spirits go amiss ?
How tasteless then whatever can be given !
Health is the vital principle of bliss,
And exercise of health. In proof of this,
Behold the wretch, who slugs his life away,
Soon swallow'd in disease's sad abyss ;
While he whom toil has braced, or manly play,
Has light as air each limb, each thought as clear as
day.

LVI.

"O who can speak the vigorous joys of health !
Unlogg'd the body, unobscured the mind :
The morning rises gay, with pleasing health ;
The temperate evening falls serene and kind.
In health the wiser brutes true gladness find :
See ! how the younglings frisk along the meads,
As May comes on, and wakes the balmy wind ;
Rampant with life, their joy all joy exceeds :
Yet what but high-strung health this dancing plea-
saunce breeds ?

LVII.

"But here, instead, is foster'd every ill
Which or distemper'd minds or bodies know.
Come then, my kindred spirits, do not spill
Your talents here : this place is but a show,
Whose charms delude you to the den of woe.
Come, follow me, I will direct you right,
Where pleasure's roses, void of serpents, grow,
Sincere as sweet ; come, follow this good Knight,
And you will bless the day that brought him to
your sight.

LVIII.

"Some he will lead to courts, and some to camps,
To senates some, and public sage debates,
Where, by the solemn gleam of midnight lamps,
The world is poised, and managed mighty
states ;
To high discovery some, that new creates
The face of earth ; some to the thriving mart ;
Some to the rural reign, and softer fates ;
To the sweet Muses some, who raise the heart :
All glory shall be yours, all nature, and all art !

LIX.

"There are, I see, who listen to my lay,
Who wretched sigh for virtue, but despair :
'All may be done,' methinks I hear them say,
'Even death despised by generous actions fair ;
All, but for those who to these bowers repair,
Their every power dissolved in luxury,
To quit of torpid sluggishness the lair,
And from the powerful arms of Sloth get free :
'Tis rising from the dead—Alas ! it cannot be !

LX.

"Would you then learn to dissipate the band
Of these huge threatening difficulties dire,
That in the weak man's way like lions stand,
His soul appal, and damp his rising fire ?
Resolve, resolve, and to be men aspire.
Exert that noblest privilege, alone
Here to mankind indulged ; control desire :
Let godlike Reason, from her sovereign throne,
Speak the commanding word, 'I will !' and it is done.

LXI.

"Heavens ! can you then thus waste, in shameful
Your few important days of trial here ? [wise,
Heirs of eternity ! yborn to rise
Through endless states of being, still more near
To bliss approaching, and perfection clear ;
Can you renounce a fortune so sublime,
Such glorious hopes, your backward steps to steer,
And roll, with vilest brutes, through mud and slime ?
No ! no !—Your heaven-touch'd hearts disdain the
sordid crime !"

LXII.

"Enough ! enough !" they cried—straight, from the
The better sort on wings of transport fly : [crowd,
As when amid the lifeless summits proud
Of Alpine cliffs, where to the gelid sky
Snows piled on snows in wintry torpor lie,
The rays divine of vernal Phoebus play ;
The awaken'd heaps, in streamlets from on high,
Roused into action, lively leap away,
Glad warbling through the vales, in their new being
gay.

LXIII.

Not less the life, the vivid joy serene,
That lighted up these new-created men,
Than that which wings the exulting spirit clean,
When, just deliver'd from this fleshly den,
It soaring seeks its native skies agen :
How light its essence ! how unlogg'd its powers,
Beyond the blazon of my mortal pen !
Even so we glad forsook these sinful bowers,
Even such enraptured life, such energy was ours.

LXIV.

But far the greater part, with rage inflamed,
Dire mutter'd curses, and blasphemed high Jove :
"Ye sons of hate !" they bitterly exclaim'd,
"What brought you to this seat of peace and love ?
While with kind Nature, here amid the grove,
We pass'd the harmless sabbath of our time,
What to disturb it could, fell men, emove
Your barbarous hearts ? Is happiness a crime ?
Then do the fiends of hell rule in yon Heaven sub-
lime."

LXV.

"Ye impious wretches," quoth the Knight in wrath,
"Your happiness behold !" — Then straight a wand
He waved, an anti-magic power that hath
Truth from illusive falsehood to command.
Sudden the landscape sinks on every hand ;
The pure quick streams are marshy puddles found ;
On baleful heaths the groves all blacken'd stand,
And o'er the weedy, foul, abhorred ground,
Snakes, adders, toads, each loathsome creature
crawls around.

LXVI.

And here and there, on trees by lightning scath'd,
Unhappy wights who loathed life yhung ;
Or, in fresh gore and recent murder bathed,
They weltering lay ; or else, infuriate flung
Into the gloomy flood, while ravens sung
The funeral dirge, they down the torrent roll'd :
These, by distemper'd blood to madness stung,
Had doom'd themselves ; whence oft, when night
controll'd
The world, returning hither their sad spirits howl'd.

LXVII.

Meantime a moving scene was open laid ;
That Lazar-house, I whilom in my lay
Depainted have, its horrors deep display'd,
And gave unnumber'd wretches to the day,
Who tossing there in squalid misery lay,
Soon as of sacred light the unwonted smile
Pour'd on these living catacombs its ray,
Through the drear caverns stretching many a mile,
The sick upraised their heads, and dropp'd their
woes awhile.

LXVIII.

"O Heaven !" they cried, "and do we once more see
Yon blessed sun, and this green earth so fair ?
Are we from noisome damps of pesthouse free ?
And drink our souls the sweet ethereal air ?
O thou ! or Knight, or God ! who holdest there
That fiend, oh keep him in eternal chains !
But what for us, the children of Despair,
Brought to the brink of hell, what hope remains ?
Repentance does itself but aggravate our pains."

LXIX.

The gentle Knight, who saw their rueful case,
Let fall adown his silver beard some tears.
"Certes," quoth he, "it is not even in grace
T' undo the past, and eke your broken years :
Nathless, to nobler worlds Repentance rears,
With humble hope, her eye ; to her is given
A power the truly contrite hearts that cheers ;
She quells the brand by which the rocks are riven ;
She more than merely softens, she rejoices Heaven.

LXX.

"Then patient bear the sufferings you have earn'd,
And by these sufferings purify the mind ;
Let wisdom be by past misconduct learn'd ;
Or pious die, with penitence resign'd ;
And to a life more happy and refined,
Doubt not, you shall, new creatures, yet arise.
Till then, you may expect in me to find
One who will wipe your sorrow from your eyes,
One who will soothe your pangs, and wing you to
the skies."

LXXI.

They silent heard, and pour'd their thanks in
tears ;
"For you," resumed the Knight with sterner tone,
"Whose hard dry hearts the obdurate demon sears,
That villain's gifts will cause you many a groan ;
In dolorous mansion long you must bemoan
His fatal charms, and weep your stains away :
Till, soft and pure as infant goodness grown,
You feel a perfect change : then, who can say
What grace may yet shine forth in Heaven's
eternal day ?"

LXXII.

This said, his powerful wand he waved anew :
Instant, a glorious angel-train descends,
The Charities, to wit, of rosy hue ;
Sweet love their looks a gentle radiance lends,
And with seraphic flame compassion blends.
At once, delighted, to their charge they fly :
When lo ! a goodly hospital ascends,
In which they bade each lenient aid be nigh,
That could the sick-bed smooth of that sad company.

LXXIII.

It was a worthy edifying sight,
And gives to human kind peculiar grace,
To see kind hands attending day and night,
With tender ministry, from place to place.
Some prop the head ; some from the pallid face
Wipe off the faint cold dews weak Nature sheds ;
Some reach the healing draught : the whilst, to chase
The fear supreme, around their soften'd beds,
Some holy man by prayer all opening Heaven
dispreads.

LXXIV.

Attended by a glad acclaiming train,
Of those he rescued had from gaping hell,
Then turn'd the Knight ; and, to his hall again
Soft-pacing, sought of peace the mossy cell :
Yet down his cheeks the gems of pity fell,
To see the helpless wretches that remain'd,
There left through delves and deserts dire to yell ;
Amazed, their looks with pale dismay were stain'd,
And spreading wide their hands, they meek re-
pentance feign'd.

LXXV.

But ah ! their scorned day of grace was past :
For (horrible to tell !) a desert wild
Before them stretch'd, bare, comfortless, and vast !
With gibbets, bones, and carcases defiled,
There nor trim field, nor lively culture smiled ;
Nor waving shade was seen, nor fountain fair ;
But sands abrupt on sands lay loosely piled, *Caere*,
Through which they floundering toil'd with painful
Whilst *Phœbus* smote them sore, and fired the
cloudless air.

LXXVI.

Then, varying to a joyless land of bogs,
 The sadden'd country a grey waste appear'd,
 Where nought but putrid steams and noisome fogs
 For ever hung on drizzly Auster's beard ;
 Or else the ground, by piercing Caurus sear'd,
 Was jagg'd with frost, or heap'd with glazed snow ;
 Through these extremes a ceaseless round they
 By cruel fiends still hurried to and fro, [steer'd,
 Gaunt Beggary and Scorn, with many hell-hounds
 moe.

LXXVII.

The first was with base dunhill rags yclad,
 Tainting the gale, in which they flutter'd light ;
 Of morbid hue his features, sunk and sad !
 His hollow eyne shook forth a sickly light ;
 And o'er his lank jawbone, in piteous plight,
 His black rough beard was matted rank and vile ;
 Direful to see ! a heart-appalling sight !
 Meantime foul scurf and blotches him defile ;
 And dogs, where'er he went, still barked all the
 while.

LXXIII.

The other was a fell despoightful fiend :
 Hell holds none worse in baleful bower below ;
 By pride, and wit, and rage, and rancour, keen'd !
 Of man alike, if good or bad, the foe !
 With nose upturn'd he always made a show
 As if he smelt some nauseous scent ; his eye
 Was cold and keen, like blast from boreal snow ;
 And taunts he casten forth most bitterly.
 Such were the twain that off drove this ungodly fry.

LXXIX.

Even so through Brentford town, a town of mud,
 A herd of bristly swine is prick'd along ;
 The filthy beasts, that never chew the cud, [song,
 Still grunt, and squeak, and sing their troublous
 And oft they plunge themselves the mire among ;
 But aye the ruthless driver goads them on,
 And aye of barking dogs the bitter throng
 Makes them renew their unmelodious moan ;
 Ne ever find they rest from their unresting fone.

A POEM,

SACRED

TO THE MEMORY OF SIR ISAAC NEWTON.

INSCRIBED TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE SIR ROBERT WALPOLE.

SHALL the great soul of Newton quit this earth,
To mingle with his stars ; and every Muse,
Astonish'd into silence, shun the weight
Of honours due to his illustrious name ?
But what can man ?—Even now the sons of light
In strains high-warbled to seraphic lyre,
Hail his arrival on the coast of bliss.
Yet am not I deterr'd, though high the theme,
And sung to harps of angels ; for with you,
Ethereal flames ! ambitious, I aspire
In Nature's general symphony to join.

And what new wonders can ye show your guest !
Who, while on this dim spot, where mortals toil
Clouded in dust, from motion's simple laws,
Could trace the secret hand of Providence,
Wide-working through this universal frame.

Have ye not listen'd while he bound the suns
And planets to their spheres ! the unequal task
Of human-kind till then. Oft had they roll'd
O'er erring man the year, and oft disgraced
The pride of schools, before their course was known
Full in its causes and effects to him,
All-piercing sage ! who sat not down and dream'd
Romantic schemes, defended by the din
Of specious words, and tyranny of names ;
But, bidding his amazing mind attend,
And with heroic patience years on years
Deep-searching, saw at last the System dawn,
And shine, of all his race, on him alone.

What were his raptures then ! how pure ! how
strong !

And what the triumphs of old Greece and Rome,
By his diminish'd, but the pride of boys
In some small farc victoriously ! when instead
Of shatter'd parcels of this earth usurp'd
By violence unmanly, and sore deeds
Of cruelty and blood, Nature herself
Stood all-subdued by him, and open laid
Her ever-latent glory to his view.

All intellectual eye, our solar round
First gazing through, he by the blended power
Of gravitation and projection saw
The whole in silent harmony revolve.

From unassisted vision hid, the moons
To cheer remoter planets numerous form'd,
By him in all their mingled tracts were seen.
He also fix'd our wandering queen of night,
Whether she wanes into a scanty orb,
Or, waxing broad, with her pale shadowy light,
In a soft deluge overflows the sky.
Her every motion clear-discerning, he
Adjusted to the mutual main, and taught
Why now the mighty mass of water swells
Resistless, heaving on the broken rocks,
And the full river turning : till again
The tide revertive, unattracted, leaves
A yellow waste of idle sands behind.

Then breaking hence, he took his ardent flight
Through the blue infinite ; and every star,
Which the clear concave of a winter's night
Pours on the eye, or astronomic tube,
Far-stretching, snatches from the dark abyss ;
Or such as farther in successive skies
To fancy shine alone, at his approach
Blazed into suns, the living centre each
Of an harmonious system : all combined,
And ruled unerring by that single power,
Which draws the stone projected to the ground.

O unprofuse magnificence divine !
O wisdom truly perfect ! thus to call
From a few causes such a scheme of things,
Effects so various, beautiful, and great,
An universe complete ! And, O beloved
Of Heaven ! whose well-purged penetrative eye,
The mystic veil transpiercing, inly scann'd
The rising, moving, wide-establish'd frame.

He, first of men, with awful wing pursued
The comet through the long elliptic curve,
As round innumerable worlds he wound his way ;
Till, to the forehead of our evening sky
Return'd, the blazing wonder glares anew,
And o'er the trembling nations shakes dismay.

The heavens are all his own ; from the wild rule
Of whirling vortices, and circling spheres,
To their first great simplicity restored.
The schools astonish'd stood ; but found it vain

To combat still with demonstration strong,
And, unawaken'd, dream beneath the blaze
Of truth. At once their pleasing visions fled
With the gay shadows of the morning mix'd,
When Newton rose, our philosophic sun.

The ærial flow of sound was known to him,
From whence it first in wavy circles breaks,
Till the touch'd organ takes the message in.
Nor could the darting beam of speed, immense,
Escape his swift pursuit, and measuring eye.
Even light itself, which everything displays,
Shone undiscover'd, till his brighter mind
Untwisted all the shining robe of day ;
And, from the whitening undistinguish'd blaze,
Collecting every ray into his kind,
To the charm'd eye educed the gorgeous train
Of parent colours. First the flaming red
Sprung vivid forth ; the tawny orange next ;
And next delicious yellow ; by whose side
Fell the kind beams of all-refreshing green :
Then the pure blue, that swells autumnal skies,
Ethereal play'd ; and then, of sadder hue,
Emerg'd the deepen'd indico, as when
The heavy-skirted evening droops with frost ;
While the last gleamings of refracted light
Died in the fainting violet away.
These, when the clouds distil the rosy shower,
Shine out distinct adown the watery bow ;
While o'er our heads the dewy vision bends
Delightful, melting on the fields beneath.
Myriads of mingling dyes from these result,
And myriads still remain :—infinite source
Of beauty, ever flushing, ever new !

Did ever poet image aught so fair,
Dreaming in whispering groves, by the hoarse
brook ?

Or prophet, to whose rapture heaven descends ?
Even now the setting sun and shifting clouds,
Seen, Greenwich, from thy lovely heights, declare
How just, how beauteous the refractive law.

The noiseless tide of time, all bearing down
To vast eternity's unbounded sea,
Where the green islands of the happy shine,
He stemm'd alone : and to the source (involved
Deep in primeval gloom) ascending, raised
His lights at equal distances, to guide
Historian, wilder'd on his darksome way.

But who can number up his labours ? who
His high discoveries sing ? when but a few
Of the deep-studying race can stretch their minds
To what he knew. In fancy's lighter thought,
How shall the Muse then grasp the mighty theme ?

What wonder thence that his devotion swell'd
Responsive to his knowledge ! for could he,
Whose piercing mental eye diffusive saw
The finish'd university of things,
In all its order, magnitude and parts,
Forebear incessant to adore that Power
Who fills, sustains, and actuates the whole ?

Say, ye who best can tell, ye happy few,
Who saw him in the softest lights of life,

All unwithheld, indulging to his friends
The vast unborrow'd treasures of his mind,
Oh speak the wondrous man ! how mild, how calm,
How greatly humble, how divinely good ;
How firm establish'd on eternal truth ;
Fervent in doing well, with every nerve
Still pressing on, forgetful of the past,
And panting for perfection : far above
Those little cares, and visionary joys,
That so perplex the fond impassion'd heart
Of ever cheated, ever trusting man.

And you, ye hopeless gloomy-minded tribe,
You who, unconscious of those nobler flights
That reach impatient at immortal life,
Against the prime endearing privilege
Of being dare contend, say, can a soul
Of such extensive, deep, tremendous powers,
Enlarging still, be but a finer breath
Of spirits dancing through their tubes awhile,
And then for ever lost in vacant air ?

But hark ! methinks I hear a warning voice,
Solemn as when some awful change is come,
Sound through the world—'Tis done ! The mea-
sure's full ;

And I resign my charge.—Ye mouldering stones,
That build the towering pyramid, the proud
Triumphal arch, the monument effaced
By ruthless ruin, and whate'er supports
The worship'd name of hoar antiquity,
Down to the dust ! what grandeur can ye boast
While Newton lifts his column to the skies,
Beyond the waste of time. Let no weak drop
Be shed for him. The virgin in her bloom
Cut off, the joyous youth, and darling child,
These are the tombs that claim the tender tear,
And elegiac song. But Newton calls
For other notes of gratulation high,
That now he wanders through those endless worlds
He here so well described, and wondering talks
And hymns their Author with his glad compeers.

Oh, Britain's boast ! whether with angels thou
Sittest in dread discourse, or fellow-blest,
Who joy to see the honour of their kind ;
Or whether, mounted on cherubic wing,
Thy swift career is with the whirling orbs,
Comparing things with things, in rapture lost,
And grateful adoration, for that light
So plenteous ray'd into thy mind below,
From Light himself ; oh, look with pity down
On human-kind, a frail erroneous race !
Exalt the spirit of a downward world !
O'er thy dejected country chief preside,
And be her genius call'd ! her studies raise,
Correct her manners, and inspire her youth.
For, though depraved and sunk, she brought thee
forth,

And glories in thy name ; she points thee out
To all her sons, and bids them eye thy star :
While in expectance of the second life,
When time shall be no more, thy sacred dust
Sleeps with her kings, and dignifies the scene.

A POEM,

TO

THE MEMORY OF THE RIGHT HON. THE LORD TALBOT,

LATE CHANCELLOR OF GREAT BRITAIN.

ADDRESSED TO HIS SON.

WHILE, with the public, you, my Lord, lament
A friend and father lost ; permit the Muse,—
The Muse assign'd of old a double theme,—
To praise dead worth and humble living pride,
Whose generous task begins where interest ends :
Permit her on a Talbot's tomb to lay
This cordial verse sincere, by truth inspired,
Which means not to bestow but borrow fame.
Yes, she may sing his matchless virtues now—
Unhappy that she may. But where begin ?
How from the diamond single out each ray,
Where all, though trembling with ten thousand
Effuse one dazzling undivided light ? [hues,

Let the low-minded of these narrow days
No more presume to deem the lofty tale
Of ancient times, in pity to their own,
Romance. In Talbot, we united saw
The piercing eye, the quick enlighten'd soul,
The graceful ease, the flowing tongue of Greece,
Join'd to the virtues and the force of Rome.

Eternal Wisdom, that all-quickening sun,
Whence every life, in just proportion, draws
Directing light and actuating flame,
Ne'er with a larger portion of its beams
Awaken'd mortal clay. Hence steady, calm,
Diffusive, deep, and clear, his reason saw,
With instantaneous view, the truth of things ;
Chief what to human life and human bliss
Pertains, that noblest science, fit for man :
And hence, responsive to his knowledge, glow'd
His ardent virtue. Ignorance and vice,
In consort foul, agree ; each heightening each ;
While virtue draws from knowledge brighter fire.

What grand, what comely, or what tender sense,
What talent, or what virtue, was not his ?
What that can render man or great or good,
Give useful worth, or amiable grace ?
Nor could he brook in studious shade to lie,
In soft retirement, indolently pleased
With selfish peace. The siren of the wise,
(Who steals the Aëonian song, and, in the shape
Of virtue, woos them from a worthless world)
Though deep he felt her charms, could never melt
His strenuous spirit, recollected, calm,
As silent night, yet active as the day.

The more the bold, the bustling, and the bad,
Press to usurp the reins of power, the more
Behoves it virtue, with indignant zeal,
To check their combination. Shall low views
Of sneaking interest or luxurious vice,
The villain's passions, quicken more to toil,
And dart a livelier vigour through the soul,
Than those that, mingled with our truest good,
With present honour and immortal fame,
Involve the good of all ? An empty form
Is the weak virtue, that amid the shade
Lamenting lies, with future schemes amused,
While wickedness and folly, kindred powers,
Confound the world. A Talbot's, different far,
Sprung ardent into action, that disdain'd
To lose in deathlike sloth one pulse of life,
That might be saved ; disdain'd for coward ease,
And her insipid pleasures, to resign
The prize of glory, the keen sweets of toil,
And those high joys that teach the truly great
To live for others, and for others die.

Early, behold ! he breaks benign on life.
Not breathing more beneficence, the Spring
Leads in her swelling train the gentle airs :
While gay, behind her, smiles the kindling waste
Of ruffian storms and winter's lawless rage.
In him Astrea, to this dim abode
Of ever wandering men, return'd again :
To bless them his delight, to bring them back,
From thorny error, from unjoyous wrong,
Into the paths of kind primeval faith,
Of happiness and justice. All his parts,
His virtues all, collected, sought the good
Of human kind. For *that* he, fervent, felt
The throb of patriots, when they model states :
Anxious for that, nor needful sleep could hold
His still-awaken'd soul ; nor friends had charms
To steal, with pleasing guile, one useful hour ;
Toil knew no languor, no attraction joy.
Thus with unwearied steps, by virtue led,
He gain'd the summit of that sacred hill,
Where, rais'd above black Envy's darkening clouds,
Her spotless temple lifts its radiant front.
Be named, victorious ravagers, no more !
Vanish, ye human comets ! shrink your blaze !

Ye that your glory to your terrors owe,
As, o'er the gazing desolated earth,
You scatter famine, pestilence, and war ;
Vanish ! before this vernal sun of fame ;
Effulgent sweetness ! beaming life and joy.

How the heart listen'd, while he, pleading, spoke !
While on the enlighten'd mind, with winning art,
His gentle reason so persuasive stole,
That the charm'd hearer thought it was his own.
Ah ! when, ye studious of the laws, again
Shall such enchanting lessons bless your ear ?
When shall again the darkest truths, perplex'd,
Be set in ample day ? when shall the harsh
And arduous open into smiling ease ?
The solid mix with elegant delight ?
His was the talent with the purest light
At once to pour conviction on the soul,
And warm with lawful flame the impassion'd heart.
That dangerous gift with him was safely lodged
By Heaven. He, sacred to his country's cause,
To trample want and worth, to suffering right,
To the lone widow's and her orphan's woes,
Reserved the mighty charm. With equal brow,
Despising then the smiles or frowns of power,
He all that noblest eloquence effused,
Which generous passion, taught by reason, breathes :
Then spoke the man ; and, over barren art,
Prevail'd abundant nature. Freedom then
His client was, humanity and truth.

Placed on the seat of justice, there he reign'd,
In a superior sphere of cloudless day,
A pure intelligence. No tumult there,
No dark emotion, no intemperate heat,
No passion e'er disturb'd the clear serene
That round him spread. A zeal for right alone,
The love of justice, like the steady sun,
Its equal ardour lent ; and sometimes raised
Against the sons of violence, of pride,
And bold deceit, his indignation gleam'd,
Yet still by sober dignity restrain'd.
As intuition quick, he snatch'd the truth,
Yet with progressive patience, step by step,
Self-diffident, or to the slower kind,
He through the maze of falsehood traced it on,
Till, at the last, evolved, it full appear'd,
And even the loser own'd the just decree.

But when, in senates, he, to freedom firm,
Enlighten'd freedom, plann'd salubrious laws,
His various learning, his wide knowledge, then,
His insight deep into Britannia's weal,
Spontaneous seem'd from simple sense to flow,
And the plain patriot smooth'd the brow of law.
No specious swell, no frothy pomp of words
Fell on the cheated ear ; no studied maze
Of declamation, to perplex the right,
He, darkening, threw around : safe in itself,
In its own force, all-powerful reason spoke ;
While on the great, the ruling point, at once,
He stream'd decisive day, and show'd it vain
To lengthen farther out the clear debate.
Conviction breathes conviction ; to the heart,
Pour'd ardent forth in eloquence unbid,
The heart attends : for let the vernal try
Their every hardening stupefying art,
Truth must prevail, zeal will enkindle zeal,
And Nature, skilful touch'd, is honest still.

Behold him in the councils of his prince,
What faithful light he lends ! How rare, in courts,
Such wisdom ! such abilities ! and join'd
To virtue so determined, public zeal,

And honour of such adamant proof,
As even corruption, hopeless, and o'er-awed,
Durst not have tempted ! Yet of manners mild,
And winning every heart, he knew to please,
Nobly to please ; while equally he scorn'd
Or adulation to receive, or give.
Happy the state, where wakes a ruling eye
Of such inspection keen, and general care !
Beneath a guard so vigilant, so pure,
Toil may resign his careless head to rest,
And ever-jealous freedom sleep in peace.
Ah ! lost untimely ! lost in downward days !
And many a patriot counsel with him lost !
Counsels that might have humbled Britain's foe,
Her native foe, from eldest time by fate
Appointed, as did once a Talbot's arms.

Let learning, arts, let universal worth,
Lament a patron lost, a friend and judge.
Unlike the sons of vanity, that, veil'd
Beneath the patron's prostituted name,
Dare sacrifice a worthy man to pride,
And flush confusion o'er an honest cheek.
When he conferr'd a grace, it seem'd a debt
Which he to merit, to the public, paid,
And to the great all-bounteous Source of Good.
His sympathising heart itself received
The generous obligation he bestow'd.
This, this indeed, is patronizing worth.
Their kind protector him the Muses own,
But scorn with noble pride the boasted aid
Of tasteless vanity's insulting hand.
The gracious stream, that cheers the letter'd world,
Is not the noisy gift of summer's noon,
Whose sudden current, from the naked root,
Washes the little soil which yet remain'd,
And only more dejects the blushing flowers :
No, 'tis the soft descending dews at eve,
The silent treasures of the vernal year,
Indulging deep their stores, the still night long :
Till, with returning morn, the freshen'd world
Is fragrance all, all beauty, joy, and song.

Still let me view him in the pleasing light
Of private life, where pomp forgets to glare,
And where the plain unguarded soul is seen.
There, with that truest greatness he appear'd
Which thinks not of appearing ; kindly veil'd
In the soft graces of the friendly scene,
Inspiring social confidence and ease.
As free the converse of the wise and good,
As joyous, disentangling every power,
And breathing mix'd improvement with delight,
As when amid the various-blossom'd spring,
Or gentle-beaming autumn's pensive shade,
The philosophic mind with nature talks.
Say ye, his sons, his dear remains, with whom
The father laid superfluous state aside,
Yet raised your filial duty thence the more,
With friendship raised it, with esteem, with love
Beyond the ties of blood, oh ! speak the joy,
The pure serene, the cheerful wisdom mild,
The virtuous spirit, which his vacant hours,
In semblance of amusement, through the breast
Infused. And thou, O Rundle* ! lend thy strain,
Thou darling friend ! thou brother of his soul !
In whom the head and heart their stores unite :
Whatever fancy paints, invention pours,
Judgment digests, the well-tuned bosom feels,
Truth natural, moral, or divine, has taught,

* Dr. Rundle, late bishop of Derry in Ireland.

The virtues dictate or the Muses sing.
 Lend me the plaint, which, to the lonely main,
 With memory conversing, you will pour,
 As on the pebbled shore you, pensive, stray,
 Where Derry's mountains a bleak crescent form,
 And mid their ample round receive the waves,
 That from the frozen pole, resounding, rush,
 Impetuous. Though from native sun-shine driven,
 Driven from your friends, the sun-shine of the soul,
 By slanderous zeal, and politics infirm,
 Jealous of worth ; yet will you bless your lot,
 Yet will you triumph in your glorious fate,
 Whence Talbot's friendship glows to future times,
 Intrepid, warm ! of kindred tempers born ;
 Nursed, by experience, into slow esteem,
 Calm confidence unbounded, love not blind,
 And the sweet light from mingled minds disclosed,
 From mingled chymic oils as bursts the fire.

I too remember well that cheerful bowl,
 Which round his table flow'd. The serious there
 Mix'd with the sportive, with the learn'd the plain ;
 Mirth soften'd wisdom, candour temper'd mirth ;
 And wit its honey'd lent, without the sting.
 Not simple nature's unaffected sons,
 The blameless Indians, round the forest-cheer,
 In sunny lawn or shady covert set,
 Hold more unspotted converse : nor, of old,
 Rome's awful consuls, her dictator-swains,
 As on the product of their Sabine farms
 They fared, with stricter virtue fed the soul :
 Nor yet in Athens, at an Attic meal,
 Where Socrates presided, fairer truth,
 More elegant humanity, more grace,
 Wit more refined, or deeper science reign'd.

But far beyond the little vulgar bounds
 Of family, or friends, or native land,
 By just degrees, and with proportion'd flame,
 Extended his benevolence : a friend
 To human kind, to parent nature's works.
 Of free access, and of engaging grace,
 Such as a brother to a brother owes,
 He kept an open judging ear for all,
 And spread an open countenance, where smiled
 The fair effulgence of an open heart :
 While on the rich, the poor, the high, the low,
 With equal ray, his ready goodness shone :
 For nothing human foreign was to him.

Thus to a dread inheritance, my Lord,
 And hard to be supported, you succeed :
 But kept by virtue, as by virtue gain'd,
 It will, through latest time, enrich your race,
 When grosser wealth shall moulder into dust,
 And with their authors in oblivion sunk
 Vain titles lie, the servile badges oft
 Of mean submission, not the meed of worth.
 True genuine honour its large patent holds
 Of all mankind, through every land and age,
 Of universal reason's various sons,
 And even of God himself, sole perfect Judge !
 Yet know these noblest honours of the mind
 On rigid terms descend : the high-placed heir,
 Scann'd by the public eye, that, with keen gaze,
 Malignant seeks out faults, cannot through life,
 Amid the nameless insects of a court,
 Unheeded steal : but, with his sire compared,
 He must be glorious, or he must be scorn'd.

This truth to you, who merit well to bear
 A name to Britons dear, the officious Muse
 May safely sing, and sing without reserve.

Vain were the plaint, and ignorant the tear,
 That should a Talbot mourn. Ourselves, indeed,
 Our country robb'd of her delight and strength,
 We may lament. Yet let us, grateful, joy,
 That we such virtues knew, such virtues felt,
 And feel them still, teaching our views to rise
 Through ever-brightening scenes of future worlds.
 Be dumb, ye worst of zealots ! ye that, prone
 To thoughtless dust, renounce that generous hope
 Whence every joy below its spirit draws,
 And every pain its balm : a Talbot's light,
 A Talbot's virtues claim another source,
 Than the blind maze of undesigning blood ;
 Nor when that vital fountain plays no more,
 Can they be quench'd amid the gelid stream.

Methinks I see his mounting spirit, freed
 From tangling earth, regain the realms of day,
 Its native country, whence, to bless mankind,
 Eternal Goodness, on this darksome spot,
 Had ray'd it down a while. Behold ! approved
 By the tremendous Judge of heaven and earth,
 And to the Almighty Father's presence join'd,
 He takes his rank, in glory, and in bliss,
 Amid the human worthies. Glad around
 Crowd his compatriot shades, and point him out
 With joyful pride, Britannia's blameless boast.
 Ah ! who is he, that with a fonder eye
 Meets thine enraptured ?—'Tis the best of sons !
 The best of friends ! — Too soon is realized
 That hope, which once forbad thy tears to flow !
 Meanwhile the kindred souls of every land,
 (Howe'er divided in the fretful days
 Of prejudice and error) mingled now,
 In one selected never-jarring state,
 Where God himself their only monarch reigns,
 Partake the joy : yet, such the sense that still
 Remains of earthly woes, for us below,
 And for our loss they drop a pitying tear.
 But cease, presumptuous Muse, nor vainly strive
 To quit this cloudy sphere that binds thee down :
 'Tis not for mortal hand to trace these scenes,
 Scenes, that our gross ideas groveling cast
 Behind, and strike our boldest language dumb.

Forgive, immortal shade ! if aught from earth,
 From dust low-warbled, to those groves can rise,
 Where flows celestial harmony, forgive
 This fond superfluous verse. With deep-felt voice,
 On every heart impress'd, thy deeds themselves
 Attest thy praise. Thy praise the widow's sighs,
 And orphan's tears embalm. The good, the bad,
 The sons of justice and the sons of strife,
 All who or freedom or who interest prize,
 A deep-divided nation's parties all,
 Conspire to swell thy spotless praise to heaven.
 Glad heaven receives it, and seraphic lyres
 With songs of triumph thy arrival hail.
 How vain this tribute then ! this lowly lay !
 Yet nought is vain which gratitude inspires.
 The Muse, besides, her duty thus approves
 To virtue, to her country, to mankind,
 To ruling nature, that, in glorious charge,
 As to her priestess, gives it her, to hymn
 Whatever good and excellent she forms.

POEMS

ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

EPITAPH ON MISS STANLEY.

HERE, STANLEY ! rest, escaped this mortal strife,
Above the joys, beyond the woes of life.
Fierce pangs no more thy lively beauties stain,
And sternly try thee with a year of pain :
No more sweet patience, feigning oft relief,
Lights thy sick eye, to cheat a parent's grief :
With tender art, to save her anxious groan,
No more thy bosom presses down its own :
Now well-earn'd peace is thine, and bliss sincere :
Ours be the lenient, not displeasing tear !

O born to bloom, then sink beneath the storm ;
To show us Virtue in her fairest form ;
To show us artless Reason's moral reign,
What boastful Science arrogates in vain ;
The obedient passions, knowing each their part ;
Calm light the head, and harmony the heart !

Yes, we must follow soon, will glad obey,
When a few suns have roll'd their cares away,
Tired with vain life, will close the willing eye :
'Tis the great birth-right of mankind to die.
Blest be the bark, that wafts us to the shore,
Where death-divided friends shall part no more !
To join thee there, here with thy dust repose,
Is all the hope thy hapless mother knows.

TO THE REV. MR. MURDOCH,

RECTOR OF STRADDISHALL IN SUFFOLK. 1739.

THUS safely low, my friend, thou canst not fall :
Here reigns a deep tranquillity o'er all ;
No noise, no care, no vanity, no strife ;
Men, woods, and fields, all breathe untroubled life.
Then keep each passion down, however dear ;
Trust me, the tender are the most severe.
Guard, while 'tis thine, thy philosophic ease,
And ask no joy but that of virtuous peace ;
That bids defiance to the storms of fate :
High bliss is only for a higher state.

A PARAPHRASE ON THE LATTER PART OF THE SIXTH CHAPTER OF ST. MATTHEW.

WHEN my breast labours with oppressive care,
And o'er my cheek descends the falling tear ;
While all my warring passions are at strife,
Oh, let me listen to the words of life !
Raptures deep-felt his doctrine did impart,
And thus he raised from earth the drooping heart :

Think not, when all your scanty stores afford
Is spread at once upon the sparing board ;
Think not, when worn the homely robe appears,
While, on the roof, the howling tempest bears ;
What farther shall this feeble life sustain,
And what shall clothe these shivering limbs again.
Say, does not life its nourishment exceed ?
And the fair body its investing weed ?

Behold ! and look away your low despair—
See the light tenants of the barren air :
To them, nor stores, nor granaries, belong,
Nought but the woodland, and the pleasing song ;
Yet, your kind heavenly Father bends his eye
On the least wing, that flits along the sky.
To him they sing when Spring renews the plain,
To him they cry in Winter's pinching reign ;
Nor is their music nor their plaint in vain :
He hears the gay, and the distressful call,
And with unsparing bounty fills them all.

Observe the rising lily's snowy grace,
Observe the various vegetable race ;
They neither toil, nor spin, but careless grow,
Yet see how warm they blush ! how bright they glow !
What regal vestments can with them compare !
What king so shining ! or what queen so fair !
If, ceaseless, thus the fowls of heaven he feeds ;
If o'er the fields such lucid robes he spreads ;
Will he not care for you, ye faithless, say ?
Is he unwise ? or, are ye less than they ?

SONG.

O THOU, whose tender serious eyes
Expressive speak the mind I love ;
The gentle azure of the skies,
The pensive shadows of the grove :

O mix their beauteous beams with mine,
And let us interchange our hearts ;
Let all their sweetness on me shine,
Pour'd through my soul be all their darts.

Ah ! 'tis too much ! I cannot bear
At once so soft, so keen, a ray :
In pity, then, my lovely fair,
O turn these killing eyes away !

But what avails it to conceal
One charm, where nought but charms we see ?
Their lustre then again reveal,
And let me, Myra, die of thee.

SONG.

ONE day the god of fond desire,
On mischief bent, to Damon said,
Why not disclose your tender fire,
Not own it to the lovely maid ?

The shepherd mark'd his treacherous art,
And, softly sighing, thus replied :
'Tis true you have subdued my heart,
But shall not triumph o'er my pride.

The slave in private only bears
Your bondage, who his love conceals :
But when his passion he declares,
You drag him at your chariot-wheels.

SONG.

HARD is the fate of him who loves,
Yet dares not tell his trembling pain,
But to the sympathetic groves,
But to the lonely listening plain.

Oh ! when she blesses next your shade,
Oh ! when her footsteps next are seen
In flowery tracks along the mead,
In fresher mazes o'er the green,

Ye gentle spirits of the vale,
To whom the tears of love are dear,
From dying lilies waft a gale,
And sigh my sorrows in her ear.

Oh tell her what she cannot blame,
Though fear my tongue may ever bind ;
Oh tell her that my virtuous flame
Is as her spotless soul refined.

Not her own guardian angel eyes
With chaster tenderness his care,
Not purer her own wishes rise,
Not holier her own sighs in prayer.

But if, at first, her virgin fear
Should start at love's suspected name,
With that of friendship soothe her ear—
True love and friendship are the same.

SONG.

UNLESS with my Amanda blest,
In vain I twine the woodbine bower ;
Unless to deck her sweeter breast,
In vain I rear the breathing flower.

Awaken'd by the genial year,
In vain the birds around me sing ;
In vain the freshening fields appear :
Without my love there is no spring.

SONG.

FOR ever, Fortune, wilt thou prove
An unrelenting foe to love,
And when we meet a mutual heart,
Come in between, and bid us part :

Bid us sigh on from day to day,
And wish, and wish the soul away ;
Till youth and genial years are flown,
And all the life of life is gone ?

But busy, busy still art thou,
To bind the loveless joyless vow,
The heart from pleasure to delude,
To join the gentle to the rude.

For once, O Fortune ! hear my prayer,
And I absolve thy future care ;
All other blessings I resign,
Make but the dear Amanda mine.

SONG.

COME, gentle god of soft desire,
Come and possess my happy breast,
Not fury-like in flames and fire,
Or frantic folly's wildness dress ;

But come in friendship's angel-guise :
Yet dearer thou than friendship art,
More tender spirit in thy eyes,
More sweet emotions at the heart.

O come with goodness in thy train,
With peace and pleasure void of storm,
And wouldst thou me for ever gain,
Put on Amanda's winning form.

ODE.

TELL me, thou soul of her I love,
Ah ! tell me, whither art thou fled ?
To what delightful world above,
Appointed for the happy dead ?

Or dost thou, free, at pleasure, roam,
And sometimes share thy lover's woe ;
Where, void of thee, his cheerless home
Can now, alas ! no comfort know ?

Oh ! if thou hover'st round my walk,
While, under every well-known tree,
I to thy fancied shadow talk,
And every tear is full of thee ;

Should then the weary eye of grief,
Beside some sympathetic stream,
In slumber find a short relief,
Oh visit thou my soothing dream !

ODE.

O NIGHTINGALE, best poet of the grove,
That plaintive strain can ne'er belong to thee,
Blest in the full possession of thy love :
O lend that strain, sweet Nightingale, to me !

'Tis mine, alas ! to mourn my wretched fate :
I love a maid who all my bosom charms,
Yet lose my days without this lovely mate ;
Inhuman Fortune keeps her from my arms.

You, happy birds ! by nature's simple laws
Lead your soft lives, sustain'd by nature's fare ;
You dwell wherever roving fancy draws,
And love and song is all your pleasing care :

But we, vain slaves of interest and of pride,
Dare not be blest, lest envious tongues should
And hence in vain I languish for my bride ; [blame:
O mourn with me, sweet bird, my hapless flame.

ODE TO SERAPHINA.

THE wanton's charms, however bright,
Are like the false illusive light,
Whose flattering unassuming blaze
To precipices oft betrays :
But that sweet ray your beauties dart,
Which clears the mind, and cleans the heart,
Is like the sacred queen of night,
Who pours a lovely gentle light
Wide o'er the dark, by wanderers blest,
Conducting them to peace and rest.

A vicious love depraves the mind,
'Tis anguish, guilt, and folly join'd ;
But Seraphina's eyes dispense
A mild and gracious influence ;
Such as in visions angels shed
Around the heaven-illumined head.
To love thee, Seraphina, sure
Is to be tender, happy, pure ;
'Tis from low passions to escape,
And woo bright Virtue's fairest shape ;
'Tis ecstacy with wisdom join'd,
And heaven infused into the mind.

ODE ON ÆOLUS'S HARP*.

ETHEREAL race, inhabitants of air,
Who hymn your God amid the secret grove ;
Ye unseen beings to my harp repair,
And raise majestic strains, or melt in love.

Those tender notes, how kindly they upbraid,
With what soft woe they thrill the lover's heart !
Sure from the hand of some unhappy maid,
Who died of love, these sweet complainings part.

But hark ! that strain was of a graver tone,
On the deep strings his hand some hermit throws ;
Or he the sacred bard † who sat alone,
In the drear waste, and wept his people's woes.

* Æolus's harp is a musical instrument which plays with the wind, invented by Mr. Oswald. † Jeremiah.

Such was the song which Zion's children sung,
When by Euphrates' stream they made their
And to such sadly solemn notes are strung [plaint ;
Angelic harps, to soothe a dying saint.

Methinks I hear the full celestial choir,
Through heaven's high dome their awful anthem
raise ;

Now chanting clear, and now they all conspire
To swell the lofty hymn, from praise to praise.

Let me, ye wandering spirits of the wind,
Who, as wild fancy prompts you, touch the string,
Smit with your theme, be in your chorus join'd ;
For till you cease, my Muse forgets to sing.

HYMN ON SOLITUDE.

HAIL, mildly pleasing Solitude,
Companion of the wise and good !
But from whose holy piercing eye
The herd of fools and villains fly.

Oh ! how I love with thee to walk,
And listen to thy whisper'd talk,
Which innocence and truth imparts,
And melts the most obdurate hearts.

A thousand shapes you wear with ease,
And still in every shape you please.
Now wrapt in some mysterious dream,
A lone philosopher you seem ;
Now quick from hill to vale you fly,
And now you sweep the vaulted sky.
A shepherd next, you haunt the plain,
And warble forth your oaten strain :—
A lover now, with all the grace
Of that sweet passion in your face :
Then, calm'd to friendship, you assume
The gentle-looking Hartford's bloom,
As, with her Musidora, she,
(Her Musidora fond of thee)
Amid the long withdrawing vale,
Awakes the rival'd nightingale.

Thine is the balmy breath of morn,
Just as the dew-bent rose is born ;
And while meridian fervours beat,
Thine is the woodland dumb retreat ;
But chief, when evening scenes decay,
And the faint landscape swims away,
Thine is the doubtful soft decline,
And that best hour of musing thine.

Descending angels bless thy train,
The virtues of the sage, and swain ;
Plain Innocence, in white array'd,
Before thee lifts her fearless head :
Religion's beams around thee shine,
And cheer thy glooms with light divine :
About thee sports sweet Liberty ;
And rapt Urania sings to thee.

Oh, let me pierce thy secret cell,
And in thy deep recesses dwell !
Perhaps from Norwood's oak-clad hill,
When Meditation has her fill,
I just may cast my careless eyes
Where London's spiry turrets rise,
Think of its crimes, its cares, its pain,
Then shield me in the woods again.

ON THE DEATH OF HIS MOTHER.

YE fabled Muses, I your aid disclaim,
 Your airy raptures, and your fancied flame :
 True genuine woe my throbbing breast inspires,
 Love prompts my lays, and filial duty fires ;
 The soul springs instant at the warm design,
 And the heart dictates every flowing line.
 See ! where the kindest, best of mothers lies,
 And death has shut her ever-weeping eyes ;
 Has lodged at last peace in her weary breast,
 And lull'd her many piercing cares to rest.
 No more the orphan train around her stands,
 While her full heart upbraids her needy hands !
 No more the widow's lonely fate she feels,
 The shock severe that modest want conceals,
 The oppressor's scourge, the scorn of wealthy pride,
 And poverty's unnumber'd ills beside.
 For see ! attended by the angelic throng,
 Through yonder worlds of light she glides along,
 And claims the well-earn'd raptures of the sky.—
 Yet fond concern recalls the mother's eye ;
 She seeks the helpless orphans left behind ;
 So hardly left ! so bitterly resign'd !
 Still, still ! is she my soul's divinest theme,
 The waking vision, and the wailing dream :
 Amid the ruddy sun's enlivening blaze
 O'er my dark eyes her dewy image plays,
 And in the dread dominion of the night
 Shines out again the sadly pleasing sight.
 Triumphant virtue all around her darts,
 And more than volumes every look imparts—
 Looks soft yet awful, melting yet serene,
 Where both the mother and the saint are seen.
 But ah ! that night—that torturing night remains ;
 May darkness dye it with its deepest stains,
 May joy on it forsake her rosy bowers,
 And screaming sorrow blast its baleful hours,
 When on the margin of the briny flood
 Chill'd with a sad presaging damp I stood,
 Took the last look, ne'er to behold her more,
 And mix'd our murmurs with the wavy roar,
 Heard the last words fall from her pious tongue,
 Then, wild into the bulging vessel flung,
 Which soon, too soon convey'd me from her sight
 Dearer than life, and liberty and light !
 Why was I then, ye powers, reserved for this ?
 Nor sunk that moment in the vast abyss ?
 Devour'd at once by the relentless wave,
 And whelm'd for ever in a watery grave !—
 Down, ye wild wishes of unruly woe !—
 I see her with immortal beauty glow,
 The early wrinkle care-contracted gone,
 Her tears all wiped, and all her sorrows flown ;
 The exalting voice of Heaven I hear her breathe,
 To soothe her soul in agonies of death ;
 I see her through the mansions blest above,
 And now she meets her dear expecting love.
 Heart-cheering sight ! but yet, alas ! o'erspread
 By the damp gloom of Grief's uncheerful shade.
 Come then of reason the reflecting hour,
 And let me trust the kind o'er-ruling Power
 Who from the night commands the shining day,
 The poor man's portion, and the orphan's stay !

ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF AIKMAN,

THE PAINTER.

Oh could I draw, my friend, thy genuine mind,
 Just, as the living forms by thee design'd,
 Of Raphael's figures none should fairer shine,
 Nor Titian's colours longer last than mine.
 A mind in wisdom old, in lenience young,
 From fervent truth where every virtue sprung ;
 Where all was real, modest, plain, sincere :
 Worth above show, and goodness unsevere :
 View'd round and round, as lucid diamonds throw
 Still as you turn them a revolving glow ;
 So did his mind reflect with secret ray,
 In various virtues, heaven's internal day,
 Whether in high discourse it soar'd sublime,
 And sprung impatient o'er the bounds of Time,
 Or wandering nature through with raptured eye,
 Adored the hand that turn'd yon azure sky :
 Whether to social life he bent his thought,
 And the right poise of mingling passions sought,
 Gay converse bless'd ; or in the thoughtful grove
 Bid the heart open every source of love.
 New varying light still set before your eyes
 The just, the good, the social, or the wise.
 For such a death who can, who would, refuse
 The friend a tear, a verse the mournful Muse ?
 Yet pay we just acknowledgment to Heaven,
 Though snatch'd so soon, that Aikman e'er was given.
 A friend, when dead, is but removed from sight,
 Hid in the lustre of eternal light :
 Oft with the mind he wonted converse keeps
 In the lone walk, or when the body sleeps
 Lets in a wandering ray, and all elate
 Wings and attracts her to another state !
 And when the parting storms of life are o'er,
 May yet rejoice him on a happier shore.
 As those we love decay, we die in part,
 String after string is sever'd from the heart ;
 Till loosen'd life at last—but breathing clay,
 Without one pang, is glad to fall away.
 Unhappy he who latest feels the blow,
 Whose eyes have wept o'er every friend laid low,
 Dragg'd lingering on from partial death to death,
 And dying, all he can resign is breath.

TO DR. DE LA COUR, IN IRELAND.

ON HIS PROSPECT OF POETRY.

HAIL gently-warbling De la Cour, whose fame,
 Spurning Hibernia's solitary coast,
 Where small rewards attend the tuneful throng,
 Pervades Britannia's well-discerning isle :
 In spite of all the gloomy-minded tribe
 That would eclipse thy fame, still shall the Muse,
 High soaring o'er the tall Parnassian mount
 With spreading pinions—sing thy wondrous praise,
 In strains attuned to the seraphic lyre.
 Sing unappall'd, though mighty be the theme !
 Oh ! could she in thy own harmonious strain,
 Where softest numbers smoothly flowing glide
 In trickling cadence ; where the milky maze
 Delves in silence ; by the harsher sound
 Of hoarser periods still unruffled, could

Her lines but like thine own Euphrates flow—
 Then might she sing in numbers worthy thee.
 But what can language do, when Fancy finds
 Herself unequal to the lovely task ?
 Can feeble words thy vivid colours paint,
 Or show the sweets which inexhaustive flow ?
 Harken, ye woods, and long-resounding groves ;
 Listen, ye streams, soft purling through the meads,
 And hymning horrid, all ye tempests roar.
 Awake, ye woodlands ! sing, ye warbling larks,
 In wildly luscious notes ! But most of all,
 Attend, ye grateful fair, attend the youth
 Who sweetly sings of nature and of you :
 From you alone his conscious breast expects
 Its soft rewards, by sordid love of gain
 Unbiass'd, undebased ; to meaner minds
 Belong such narrow views ; his nobler soul,
 Transported with a generous thirst of fame,
 Sublimely rises with expanded wings,
 And through the lucid empyrean soars.
 So the young eagle wings its rapid way
 Through heaven's broad azure ; sometimes springs
 aloft,

Now drops, now cleaves with even-waving wings
 The yielding air, nor seas nor mountains stop
 Its flight impetuous, gazing at the sun
 With irretorted eye, whilst he pervades
 A trackless void, and unexplored before.
 Long had the curious traveller strove to find
 The ruins of aspiring Babylon—
 In vain—for nought the nicest eye could trace
 Save one wide, watery, undistinguish'd waste :
 But you with more than magic art have raised
 Semiramis's city from its grave ;
 You have reversed the scripture curse, which said,
 Dragons shall here inhabit ; in your page
 We view the rising spires ; the hurried eye
 Distracted wanders through the verdant maze ;
 In middle air the pendent gardens hang,
 Tremendous ceiling !—whilst no solar beam
 Falls on the lengthen'd gloom beneath ; the woods
 Project above a steep-alluring shade ;
 The finish'd garden opens to the view
 Wide-stretching vistas, while the whispering wind
 Dimples along the breezy-ruffled lake.

Now every tree irregular and bush
 Are prodigal of harmony : the birds
 Frequent the ærial wood, and nature blushes,
 Ashamed to find herself outdone by art :
 These and a thousand beauties could I sing,
 Collecting like the ever-toiling bee
 From yonder mingled wilderness of flowers
 The aromatic sweets ; while you, great youth !
 O'er thy decaying country chief preside ;
 Be thou her genius call'd, inspire her youth
 With noble emulation to arrive
 At Helicon's fair font, which few, alas !
 Save you, have tasted, of Hibernian youth.
 Thy country, though corrupted, brought thee forth,
 And deem'd her greatest ornament ; and now
 Regards thee as her brightest northern star.
 Long may you reign as such ; and should grim
 Time,

With iron teeth, deprive us of our Pope,
 Then we'll transplant thy blooming laurels fresh
 From your bleak shore to Albion's happier coast.

VERSES ADDRESSED TO MISS YOUNG.

AH urge too late ! from beauty's bondage free,
 Why did I trust my liberty with thee ?
 And thou, why didst thou, with inhuman art,
 If not resolved to take, seduce my heart ?
 Yes, yes, you said (for lovers' eyes speak true) ;
 You must have seen how fast my passion grew :
 And when your glances chanced on me to shine,
 How my fond soul ecstatic sprung to thine !

But mark me, fair one, what I now declare
 Thy deep attention claims, and serious care :
 It is no common passion fires my breast,
 I must be wretched, or I must be blest !
 My woes all other remedy deny ;
 Or, pitying, give me hope, or bid me die !

TO MISS YOUNG,

WITH A PRESENT OF HIS SEASONS.

ACCEPT, loved nymph ! this tribute due
 To tender friendship, love, and you ;
 But with it take what breathed the whole,
 Oh ! take to thine the poet's soul.
 If fancy here her power displays,
 And if a heart exalts these lays—
 You fairest in that fancy shine,
 And all that heart is fondly thine.

ON HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE
OF WALES.

WHILE secret-leaguings nations frown around,
 Ready to pour the long-expected storm ;
 While she, who wont the restless Gaul to bound,
 Britannia, drooping, grows an empty form ;
 While on our vitals selfish parties prey,
 And deep corruption eats our soul away :

Yet in the goddess of the main appears
 A gleam of joy, gay-flushing every grace,
 As she the cordial voice of millions hears,
 Rejoicing, zealous, o'er thy rising race :
 Straight her rekindling eyes resume their fire,
 The virtues smile, the Muses tune the lyre.

But more enchanting than the Muses' song,
 United Britons thy dear offspring hail :
 The city triumphs through her glowing throng ;
 The shepherd tells his transport to the dale ;
 The sons of roughest toil forget their pain,
 And the glad sailor cheers the midnight main.

Can aught from fair Augusta's gentle blood,
 And thine, thou friend of liberty ! be born :
 Can aught save what is lovely, generous, good ;
 What will, at once, defend us, and adorn ?
 From thence prophetic joy new Edwards eyes,
 New Henrys, Annas, and Elizas rise.

May fate my fond devoted days extend,
 To sing the promised glories of thy reign ! [bend ?
 What though, by years depress'd, my muse might
 My heart will teach her still a nobler strain :
 How with recover'd Britain, will she soar,
 When France insults, and Spain shall rob no more !

THE INCOMPARABLE SOPORIFIC DOCTOR.

SWEET, sleekey doctor ! dear pacific soul !
 Lay at the beef, and suck the vital bowl !
 Still let the involving smoke around thee fly,
 And broad-look'd dulness settle in thine eye.
 Ah ! soft in down these dainty limbs repose,
 And in the very lap of slumber doze ;
 But chiefly, on the lazy day of grace,
 Call forth the lambent glories of thy face ;
 If aught the thoughts of dinner can prevail,
 And sure the Sunday's dinner cannot fail.
 To the thin church in sleepy pomp proceed,
 And lean on the lethargic book thy head.
 These eyes wipe often with the hallow'd lawn,
 Profoundly nod, immeasurably yawn.
 Slow let the prayers by the meek lips be sung,
 Nor let thy thoughts be distanced by thy tongue ;
 If e'er the lingerers are within a call,
 Or if on prayers thou deign'st to think at all.
 Yet—only yet—the swimming head we bend ;
 But when serene, the pulpit you ascend,
 Through every joint a gentle horror creeps,
 And round you the consenting audience sleeps.
 So when an ass with sluggish front appears,
 The horses start, and prick their quivering ears ;
 But soon as e'er the sage is heard to Bray,
 The fields all thunder, and they bound away.

THE HAPPY MAN.

He's not the happy man, to whom is given
 A pleteous fortune by indulgent Heaven ;
 Whose gilded roofs on shining columns rise,
 And painted walls enchant the gazer's eyes :
 Whose table flows with hospitable cheer,
 And all the various bounty of the year ; [spring,
 Whose valleys smile, whose gardens breathe the
 Whose carved mountains bleat, and forests sing ;
 For whom the cooling shade in summer twines,
 While his full cellars give their generous wines ;
 From whose wide fields unbounded autumn pours
 A golden tide into his swelling stores :
 Whose winter laughs ; for whom the liberal gales
 Stretch the big sheet, and toiling commerce sails ;
 When yielding crowds attend, and pleasure serves ;
 While youth, and health, and vigour, string his nerves.
 Even not all these, in one rich lot combined,
 Can make the happy man, without the mind ;
 Where judgment sits clear-sighted, and surveys
 The chain of reason with unerring gaze ;
 Where fancy lives, and to the brightening eyes,
 His fairer scenes, and bolder figures rise ;
 Where social love exerts her soft command,
 And plays the passions with a tender hand ;
 Whence every virtue flows, in rival strife,
 And all the moral harmony of life.

Nor canst thou, Dodington, this truth decline,
 Thine is the fortune, and the mind is thine.

ON THE

REPORT OF A WOODEN BRIDGE TO BE
BUILT AT WESTMINSTER.

By Rufus' hall, where Thames polluted flows,
 Provoked, the Genius of the river rose,
 And thus exclaim'd : " Have I, ye British swains,
 Have I for ages laved your fertile plains ?
 Given herds, and flocks, and villages increase,
 And fed a richer than a golden fleece ?
 Have I, ye merchants, with each swelling tide,
 Pour'd Afric's treasure in, and India's pride ?
 Lent you the fruit of every nation's toil ?
 Made every climate yours, and every soil ?
 Yet pilfer'd from the poor, by gaming base,
 Yet must a wooden bridge my waves disgrace ?
 Tell not to foreign streams the shameful tale,
 And be it publish'd in no Gallic vale."
 He said ; and plunging to his crystal dome,
 While o'er his head the circling waters foam.

PROLOGUE

TO

MR. MALLET'S "MUSTAPHA."

SINCE Athens first began to draw mankind,
 To picture life, and show the impassion'd mind,
 The truly wise have ever deem'd the stage
 The moral school of each enlighten'd age.
 There, in full pomp, the tragic Muse appears,
 Queen of soft sorrows, and of useful fears.
 Faint is the lesson reason'd rules impart :
 She pours it strong and instant through the heart.
 If virtue is the theme, we sudden glow
 With generous flame ; and what we feel, we grow.
 If vice she paints, indignant passions rise ;
 The villain sees himself with loathing eyes.
 His soul starts, conscious, at another's groan ;
 And the pale tyrant trembles on his throne.
 To-night our meaning scene attempts to show
 What fell events from dark suspicion flow ;
 Chief when it taints a lawless monarch's mind,
 To the false herd of flattering slaves confined.
 The soul sinks gradual to so dire a state ;
 Even excellence but serves to feed its hate :
 To hate remorseless, cruelty succeeds,
 And every worth, and every virtue bleeds.

Behold, our author at your bar appears,
 His modest hopes depress'd by conscious fears.
 Faults he has many—But to balance those,
 His verse with heartfelt love of virtue glows :
 All slighter errors let indulgence spare,
 And be his equal trial full and fair.
 For this best British privilege we call ;
 Then—as he merits, let him stand, or fall.

BRITANNIA ;

A Poem.

— Et tantas audetis tollere moles ?
Quos ego—sed motos præstat componere fluctus.
Post mihi non simili pena commissa luetis.
Maturate fugam, regique hæc dicite vestro :
Non illi inperium pelagi, sævumque tridentem,
Sed mihi sorte datum.——VIRG.

As on the sea-beat shore Britannia sat,
Of her degenerate sons the faded fame
Deep in her anxious heart revolving sad :
Bare was her throbbing bosom to the gale,
That hoarse, and hollow, from the bleak surge blew;
Loose flow'd her tresses, rent her azure robe.
Hung o'er the deep, from her majestic brow
She tore the laurel, and she tore the bay.
Nor ceased the copious grief to bathe her cheek ;
Nor ceased her sobs to murmur to the main.
Peace discontented nigh, departing, stretch'd
Her dove-like wings ; and War, though greatly
roused,

Yet mourns his fetter'd hands ; while thus the
queen

Of nations spoke ; and what she said the Muse
Recorded, faithful, in unbidden verse.

Even not yon sail, that, from the sky-mixt wave,
Dawns on the sight, and wafts the Royal Youth*,
A freight of future glory to my shore ;
Even not the flattering view of golden days,
And rising periods yet of bright renown,
Beneath the Parents, and their endless line
Through late revolving time, can soothe my rage ;
While, unchastised, the insulting Spaniard dares
Infest the trading flood, full of vain war
Despise my navies, and my merchants seize ;
As, trusting to false peace they fearless roam
The world of waters wild, made, by the toil,
And liberal blood of glorious ages, mine :
Nor bursts my sleeping thunder on their head.
Whence this unwonted patience ? this weak doubt ?
This tame beseeching of rejected peace ?
This meek forbearance ? this unnative fear,
To generous Britons never known before ?
And sail'd my fleets for this ; on Indian tides
To float, unactive, with the veering winds ?
The mockery of war ! while hot disease,
And sloth distemper'd, swept off burning crowds,
For action ardent ! and amid the deep,
Inglorious, sunk them in a watery grave.
There now they lie beneath the rolling flood,
Far from their friends and country, unavenged ;

And back the drooping war-ship comes again,
Dispirited, and thin ; her sons ashamed,
Thus idly to review their native shore ;
With not one glory sparkling in their eye,
One triumph in their tongue. A passenger,
The violated merchant comes along ;
That far-sought wealth, for which the noxious gale
He drew, and sweat beneath equator suns,
By lawless force detain'd ; a force that soon
Would melt away, and every spoil resign,
Were once the British lion heard to roar.
Whence is it that the proud Iberian thus,
In their own well-asserted element,
Dares rouse to wrath the masters of the main ?
Who told him, that the big incumbent war
Would not, ere this, have roll'd his trembling ports
In smoky ruin ? and his guilty stores,
Won by the ravage of a butcher'd world,
Yet unatoned, sunk in the swallowing deep,
Or led the glittering prize into the Thames ?

There was a time (O let my languid sons
Resume their spirit at the rousing thought !)
When all the pride of Spain, in one dread fleet,
Swell'd o'er the labouring surge ; like a whole heaven
Of clouds, wide-roll'd before the boundless breeze.
Gaily the splendid armament along
Exultant plough'd, reflecting a red gleam,
As sunk the sun, o'er all the flaming vast ;
Tall, gorgeous, and elate ; drunk with the dream
Of easy conquest ; while their bloated war,
Stretch'd out from sky to sky, the gather'd force
Of ages held in its capacious womb.
But soon, regardless of the cumbrous pomp,
My dauntless Britons came, a gloomy few,
With tempest black, the goodly scene deform'd,
And laid their glory waste. The bolts of fate
Resistless thunder'd through their yielding sides ;
Fierce o'er their beauty blazed the lurid flame ;
And seized in horrid grasp, or shatter'd wide,
Amid the mighty waters deep they sunk.
Then too from every promontory chill,
Rank fen, and cavern where the wild wave works,
I swept confederate winds, and swell'd a storm.
Round the glad isle, snatch'd by the vengeful blast,

* Frederic Prince of Wales, then lately arrived.

The scatter'd remnants drove ; on the blind shelve
And pointed rock, that marks the indented shore,
Relentless dash'd, where loud the northern main
Howls through the fractured Caledonian isles.

Such were the dawns of my watery reign ;
But since how vast it grew, how absolute,
Even in those troubled times, when dreadful Blake
Awed angry nations with the British name,
Let every humbled state, let Europe say,
Sustain'd and balanced, by my naval arm.
Ah what must those immortal spirits think
Of your poor shifts ! Those, for their country's good,
Who faced the blackest danger, knew no fear,
No mean submission, but commanded peace.
Ah how with indignation must they burn,
(If aught, but joy, can touch ethereal breasts)
With shame ! with grief ! to see their feeble sons
Shrink from that empire o'er the conquer'd seas,
For which their wisdom plann'd, their councils glow'd,
And their veins bled through many a toiling age.

Oh first of human blessings ! and supreme !
Fair Peace ! how lovely, how delightful thou !
By whose wide tie, the kindred sons of men,
Like brothers live, in amity combined,
And unsuspicious faith ; while honest toil
Gives every joy, and to those joys a right,
Which idle, barbarous rapine but usurps.
Pure is thy reign ; when, unaccursed by blood,
Nought, save the sweetness of indulgent showers,
Trickling distils into the verdant glebe ;
Instead of mangled carcases, sad-seen,
When the blithe sheaves lie scatter'd o'er the field ;
When only shining shares, the crooked knife,
And hooks imprint the vegetable wound ;
When the land blushes with the rose alone,
The falling fruitage and the bleeding vine.
Oh, Peace ! thou source, and soul of social life !
Beneath whose calm inspiring influence,
Science his views enlarges, Art refines,
And swelling Commerce opens all her ports ;
Blest be the man divine, who gives us thee !
Who bids the trumpet hush his horrid clang,
Nor blow the giddy nations into rage ;
Who sheaths the murderous blade ; the deadly gun
Into the well-piled armoury returns ;
And, every vigour from the work of death
To grateful industry converting, makes
The country flourish, and the city smile.
Unviolated, him the virgin sings ;
And him the smiling mother to her train.
Of him the shepherd, in the peaceful dale
Chants ; and the treasures of his labours sure,
The husbandman of him, as at the plough,
Or team, he toils. With him the sailor sooths,
Beneath the trembling moon, the midnight wave ;
And the full city, warm, from street to street,
And shop to shop, responsive, rings of him.
Nor joys one land alone ; his praise extends
Far as the sun rolls the diffusive day ;
Far as the breeze can bear the gifts of peace,
Till all the happy nations catch the song.

What would not, Peace ! the patriot bear for thee ?
What painful patience ? What incessant care ?
What mix'd anxiety ? What sleepless toil ?
Even from the rash protected, what reproach ?
For he thy value knows ; thy friendship he
To human nature : but the better thou,
The richer of delight, sometimes the more
Inevitable, war ; when ruffian force
Awakes the fury of an injured state.

Even the good patient man, whom reason rules,
Roused by bold insult, and injurious rage,
With sharp and sudden check, the astonish'd sons
Of violence confounds ; firm as his cause,
His bolder heart ; in awful justice clad ;
His eyes effulging a peculiar fire :
And, as he charges through the prostrate war,
His keen arm teaches faithless men, no more
To dare the sacred vengeance of the just.

And what, my thoughtless sons, should fire you
more

Than when your well-earn'd empire of the deep
The least beginning injury receives ?
What better cause can call your lightning forth ?
Your thunder wake ? your dearest life demand ?
What better cause, than when your country sees
The sly destruction at her vitals aim'd ?
For oh it much imports you, 'tis your all,
To keep your trade entire, entire the force
And honour of your fleets ; o'er that to watch,
Even with a hand severe, and jealous eye.
In intercourse be gentle, generous, just,
By wisdom polish'd, and of manners fair ;
But on the sea be terrible, untamed,
Unconquerable still ; let none escape,
Who shall but aim to touch your glory there.
Is there the man, into the lion's den
Who dares intrude, to snatch his young away ?
And is a Briton seized ? and seized beneath
The slumbering terrors of a British fleet ?
Then ardent rise ! Oh great in vengeance rise !
O'erturn the proud, teach rapine to restore :
And as you ride sublimely round the world,
Make every vessel stoop, make every state
At once their welfare and their duty know.
This is your glory ; this your wisdom ; this
The native power for which you were design'd
By fate, when fate design'd the firmest state,
That e'er was seated on the subject sea ;
A state alone where Liberty should live,
In these late times, this evening of mankind,
When Athens, Rome, and Carthage are no more,
The world almost in slavish sloth dissolved.
For this, these rocks around your coast were thrown ;
For this, your oaks, peculiar harden'd, shoot
Strong into sturdy growth ; for this, your hearts
Swell with a sullen courage, growing still
As danger grows ; and strength and toil for this
Are liberal pour'd o'er all the fervent land.
Then cherish this, this unexpensive power,
Undangerous to the public, ever prompt,
By lavish nature thrust into your hand :
And, unencumber'd with the bulk immense
Of conquest, whence huge empires rose, and fell
Self-crush'd, extend your reign from shore to shore,
Where'er the winds your high behests can blow ;
And fix it deep on this eternal base.
For should the sliding fabric once give way,
Soon slacken'd quite, and past recovery broke,
It gathers ruin as it rolls along,
Steep-rushing down to that devouring gulf,
Where many a mighty empire buried lies.
And should the big redundant flood of trade,
In which ten thousand thousand labours join
Their several currents, till the boundless tide
Rolls in a radiant deluge o'er the land ;
Should this bright stream, the least inflected, point
Its course another way, o'er other lands
The various treasure would resistless pour,
Ne'er to be won again ; its ancient tract

Left a vile channel, desolate, and dead,
 With all around a miserable waste.
 Not Egypt, were, her better heaven, the Nile
 Turn'd in the pride of flow ; when o'er his rocks,
 And roaring cataracts, beyond the reach
 Of dizzy vision piled, in one wide flash
 An Ethiopian deluge foams amain ;
 (Whence wondering fable traced him from the sky)
 Even not that prime of earth, where harvests crowd
 On untill'd harvests, all the teeming year,
 If of the fat o'erflowing culture robb'd,
 Were then a more uncomfortable wild,
 Steril, and void ; than of her trade deprived,
 Britons, your boasted isle : her princes sunk ;
 Her high-built honour moulder'd to the dust ;
 Unnerv'd her force ; her spirit vanish'd quite ;
 With rapid wing her riches fled away ;
 Her unfrequented ports alone the sign
 Of what she was ; her merchants scatter'd wide ;
 Her hollow shops shut up ; and in her streets,
 Her fields, woods, markets, villages, and roads,
 The cheerful voice of labour heard no more.

Oh let not then waste Luxury impair
 That manly soul of toil, which strings your nerves,
 And your own proper happiness creates.
 Oh let not the soft penetrating plague
 Creep on the free-born mind : and working there,
 With the sharp tooth of many a new-form'd want,
 Endless, and idle all, eat out the heart
 Of Liberty ; the high conception blast ;
 The noble sentiment, the impatient scorn
 Of base subjection, and the swelling wish
 For general good, erasing from the mind :
 While nought save narrow selfishness succeeds,
 And low design, the sneaking passions all
 Let loose, and reigning in the rankled breast.
 Induced at last, by scarce-perceived degrees,

Sapping the very frame of government,
 And life, a total dissolution comes ;
 Sloth, ignorance, dejection, flattery, fear,
 Oppression raging o'er the waste he makes ;
 The human being almost quite extinct ;
 And the whole state in broad corruption sinks.
 Oh shun that gulf ; that gaping ruin shun !
 And countless ages roll it far away
 From you, ye heaven-beloved ! may Liberty,
 The light of life ! the sun of human-kind !
 Whence heroes, bards, and patriots borrow flame,
 Even where the keen depressive North descends,
 Still spread, exalt, and actuate your powers !
 While slavish southern climates beam in vain.
 And may a public spirit from the throne,
 Where every virtue sits, go copious forth,
 Live o'er the land ; the finer arts inspire ;
 Make thoughtful science raise his pensive head,
 Blow the fresh bay, bid industry rejoice,
 And the rough sons of lowest labour smile.
 As when, profuse of spring, the loosen'd west
 Lifts up the pining year, and balmy breathes
 Youth, life, and love, and beauty o'er the world.

But haste we from these melancholy shores,
 Nor to deaf winds, and waves, our fruitless plaint
 Pour weak ; the country claims our active aid ;
 That let us roam ; and where we find a spark
 Of public virtue, blow it into flame.
 Lo ! now my sons, the sons of freedom ! meet
 In awful senate ; thither let us fly ;
 Burn in the patriot's thought, flow from his tongue
 In fearless truth ; myself, transform'd, preside,
 And shed the spirit of Britannia round.

This said ; her fleeting form, and airy train,
 Sunk in the gale ; and nought but ragged rocks
 Rush'd on the broken eye ; and nought was heard
 But the rough cadence of the dashing wave.

LIBERTY ;

A Poem.

TO

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS FREDERIC PRINCE OF WALES.

SIR,

WHEN I reflect upon that ready condescension, that preventing generosity, with which your Royal Highness received the following Poem under your protection, I can alone ascribe it to the recommendation and influence of the subject. In you the cause and concerns of Liberty have so zealous a patron, as entitles whatever may have the least tendency to promote them, to the distinction of your favour. And who can entertain this delightful reflection without feeling a pleasure far superior to that of the fondest author, and of which all true lovers of their country must participate? To behold the noblest dispositions of the prince and of the patriot united; an overflowing benevolence, generosity, and candour of heart, joined to an enlightened zeal for liberty—an intimate persuasion that on it depend the happiness and glory both of kings and people: to see these shining out in public virtues, as they have hitherto smiled in all the social lights and private accomplishments of life, is a prospect that cannot but inspire a general sentiment of satisfaction and gladness more easy to be felt than expressed.

If the following attempt to trace Liberty from the first ages down to her excellent establishment in Great Britain can at all merit your approbation, and prove an entertainment to your Royal Highness; if it can in any degree answer the dignity of the subject, and of the name under which I presume to shelter it; I have my best reward,—particularly as it affords me an opportunity of declaring that I am, with the greatest zeal and respect,

Sir,

Your Royal Highness's most obedient and most devoted servant,

JAMES THOMSON.

ANCIENT AND MODERN HISTORY COMPARED ;

BEING

THE FIRST PART OF LIBERTY, A POEM.

CONTENTS.

THE following poem is thrown into the form of a poetical vision. Its scene, the ruins of ancient Rome. The goddess of Liberty, who is supposed to speak through the whole, appears, characterised as British Liberty. Gives a view of ancient Italy, and particularly of republican Rome, in all her magnificence and glory. This contrasted by modern Italy; its valleys, mountains, culture, cities, people: the difference appearing strongest in the capital city Rome. The ruins of the great works of Liberty more magnificent than the borrowed pomp of Oppression; and from them revived sculpture, painting, and architecture. The old Romans apostrophised, with regard to the several melancholy changes in Italy: Horace, Tully, and Virgil, with regard to their Tibur, Tuseulum, and Naples. That once finest and most ornamented part of Italy, all along the coast of Baie, how changed. This desolation of Italy applied to Britain. Address to the goddess of Liberty, that

she would deduce from the first ages, her chief establishments, the description of which constitute the subject of the following parts of this poem. She assents, and commands what she says to be sung in Britain; whose happiness, arising from freedom, and a limited monarchy, she marks. An immediate Vision attends, and paints her words. Invocation.

O my lamented Talbot ! while with thee
The Muse gay roved the glad Hesperian round,
And drew the inspiring breath of ancient arts ;
Ah ! little thought she her returning verse
Should sing her darling subject to thy shade.
And does the mystic veil, from mortal beam,
Involve those eyes where every virtue smiled,
And all thy father's candid spirit shone ?
The light of reason, pure, without a cloud ;

Full of the generous heart, the mild regard ;
Honour disdaining blemish, cordial faith,
And limpid truth, that looks the very soul.
But to the death of mighty nations turn,
My strain ; be there absorpt the private tear.

Musing, I lay ; warm from the sacred walks,
Where at each step imagination burns :
While scatter'd wide around, awful, and hoar,
Lies, a vast monument, once-glorious Rome,
The tomb of empire ! ruins ! that efface
Whate'er, of finish'd, modern pomp can boast.

Snatch'd by these wonders to that world where
thought

Unfetter'd ranges, Fancy's magic hand
Led me anew o'er all the solemn scene,
Still in the mind's pure eye more solemn drest ;
When straight, methought, the fair majestic power
Of Liberty appear'd. Not, as of old,
Extended in her hand the cap, and rod,
Whose slave-enlarging touch gave double life :

But her bright temples bound with British oak,
And naval honours nodded on her brow.
Sublime of port : loose o'er her shoulder flow'd
Her sea-green robe, with constellations gay.

An island-goddess now ; and her high care
The Queen of Isles, the mistress of the main.
My heart beat filial transport at the sight ;
And, as she moved to speak, the awaken'd Muse
Listen'd intense. A while she look'd around,
With mournful eye the well-known ruins mark'd,
And then, her sighs repressing, thus began.

Mine are these wonders, all thou see'st is mine ;
But ah how changed ! the falling poor remains
Of what exalted once the Ansonian shore.
Look back through time ; and, rising from the gloom,
Mark the dread scene, that paints whate'er I say.

The great republic see ! that glow'd, sublime,
With the mix'd freedom of a thousand states !
Raised on the thrones of kings her curule chair,
And by her fasces awed the subject world.
See busy millions quickening all the land,
With cities throng'd, and teeming culture high :
For nature then smiled on her free-born sons,
And pour'd the plenty that belongs to men.
Behold, the country cheering, villas rise,
In lively prospect ; by the secret lapse
Of brooks now lost and streams renown'd in song :
In Umbria's closing vales, or on the brow
Of her brown hills that breathe the scented gale :
On Baia's viny coast ; where peaceful seas,
Fann'd by kind zephyrs, ever kiss the shore ;
And suns unclouded shine, through purest air :
Or in the spacious neighbourhood of Rome ;
Far-shining upward to the Sabine hills,
To Anio's shore, and Tibur's olive shade ;
To where Preneste lifts her airy brow ;
Or downward spreading to the sunny shore,
Where Alba breathes the freshness of the main.

See distant mountains leave their valleys dry,
And o'er the proud arcade the tribute pour,
To lave imperial Rome. For ages laid,
Deep, massy, firm, diverging every way,
With tombs of heroes sacred, see her roads,
By various nations trod, and suppliant kings ;
With legions flaming, or with triumph gay.

Full in the centre of these wondrous works,
The pride of earth ! Rome in her glory see !
Behold her demigods, in senate met ;
All head to counsel, and all heart to act :
The commonweal inspiring every tongue

With fervent eloquence, unbribed, and bold ;
Ere tame corruption taught the servile herd
To rank obedient to a master's voice.

Her forum see, warm, popular, and loud,
In trembling wonder hush'd, when the two sires*,
As they the private father greatly quell'd,
Stood up the public fathers of the state.
See justice judging there in human shape.
Hark ! how with freedom's voice it thunders high,
Or in soft murmurs sinks to Tully's tongue.

Her tribes, her census, see ; her generous troops,
Whose pay was glory, and their best reward
Free for their country, and for me to die ;
Ere mercenary murder grew a trade.

Mark, as the purple triumph waves along,
The highest pomp and lowest fall of life.

Her festive games, the school of heroes, see ;
Her circus, ardent with contending youth ;
Her streets, her temples, palaces, and baths,
Full of fair forms, of beauty's eldest born,
And of a people cast in virtue's mould :
While sculpture lives around, and Asian hills
Lend their best stores to heave the pillar'd dome ;
All that to Roman strength the softer touch
Of Grecian art can join. But language fails
To paint this sun, this centre of mankind ;
Where every virtue, glory, treasure, art,
Attracted strong, in heighten'd lustre met.

Need I the contrast mark ? unjoyous view !

A land in all, in government, and arts,
In virtue, genius, earth and heaven, reversed.
Who but these far-famed ruins to behold,
Proofs of a people, whose heroic aims
Soar'd far above the little selfish sphere
Of doubting modern life ; who but inflamed
With classic zeal, these consecrated scenes
Of men and deeds to trace : unhappy land,
Would trust thy wilds, and cities loose of sway ?

Are these the vales, that, once, exulting states
In their warm bosom fed ? The mountains these,
On whose high-blooming sides my sons, of old,
I bred to glory ? These dejected towns,
Where, mean, and sordid, life can scarce subsist,
The scenes of ancient opulence, and pomp ?

Come ! by whatever sacred name disguised,
Oppression, come ! and in thy works rejoice !
See nature's richest plains to putrid fens
Turn'd by thy fury. From their cheerful bounds,
See razed the enlivening village, farm, and seat.
First, rural toil, by thy rapacious hand
Robb'd of his poor reward, resign'd the plough ;
And now he dares not turn the noxious glebe.
'Tis thine entire. The lonely swain himself,
Who loves at large along the grassy downs
His flocks to pasture, thy drear champain flies.
Far as the sickening eye can sweep around,
'Tis all one desert, desolate, and grey,
Grazed by the sullen buffalo alone ;
And where the rank uncultivated growth
Of rotting ages taints the passing gale.
Beneath the baleful blast the city pines,
Or sinks enfeebled, or infected burns.
Beneath it mourns the solitary road,
Roll'd in rude mazes o'er the abandon'd waste ;
While ancient ways, ingulf'd, are seen no more.

Such thy dire plains, thou self-destroyer ! Foe
To human-kind ! Thy mountains too, profuse,
Where savage nature blooms, seem their sad plaint
To raise against thy desolating rod.

* L. J. Brutus, and Virginus.

There on the breezy brow, where thriving states,
And famous cities, once, to the pleased sun,
Far other scenes of rising culture spread,
Pale shine thy ragged towns. Neglected round,
Each harvest pines ; the livid, lean produce
Of heartless labour : while thy hated joys,
Not proper pleasure, lift the lazy hand.
Better to sink in sloth the woes of life,
Than wake their rage with unavailing toil.
Hence drooping art almost to nature leaves
The rude unguided year. Thin wave the gifts
Of yellow Ceres, thin the radiant blush
Of orchard reddens in the warmest ray.
To weedy wildness run, no rural wealth
(Such as dictators fed) the garden pours.
Crude the wild olive flows, and foul the vine ;
Nor juice Cœcubian, nor Falernian, more,
Streams life and joy, save in the Muse's bowl.
Unseconded by art, the spinning race
Draw the bright thread in vain, and idly toil.
In vain, forlorn in wilds, the citron blows ;
And flowering plants perfume the desert gale.
Through the vile thorn the tender myrtle twines.
Inglorious droops the laurel, dead to song,
And long a stranger to the hero's brow.

Nor half thy triumph this : cast from brute fields,
Into the haunts of men thy ruthless eye.
There buxom plenty never turns her horn ;
The grace and virtue of exterior life,
No clean convenience reigns ; even sleep itself,
Least delicate of powers, reluctant, there,
Lays on the bed impure his heavy head.
Thy horrid walk ! dead, empty, unadorn'd,
See streets whose echoes never know the voice
Of cheerful hurry, commerce many-tongued,
And art mechanic at his various task,
Fervent employ'd. Mark the desponding race,
Of occupation void, as void of hope ;
Hope, the glad ray, glanced from Eternal Good,
That life enlivens, and exalts its powers,
With views of fortune—madness all to them !
By thee relentless seized their better joys,
To the soft aid of cordial airs they fly,
Breathing a kind oblivion o'er their woes,
And love and music melt their souls away.
From feeble justice see how rash revenge,
Trembling, the balance snatches ; and the sword,
Fearful himself, to venal ruffians gives.
See where God's altar, nursing murder, stands,
With the red touch of dark assassins stain'd.

But chief let Rome, the mighty city ! speak
The full-exerted genius of thy reign.
Behold her rise amid the lifeless waste,
Expiring nature all corrupted round !
While the lone Tiber, through the desert plain,
Winds his waste stores, and sullen sweeps along.
Patch'd from my fragments, in unsolid pomp,
Mark how the temple glares ; and, artful dress'd,
Amusive, draws the superstitious train.
Mark how the palace lifts a lying front,
Concealing often, in magnific jail,
Proud want ; a deep unanimated gloom !
And oft adjoining to the drear abode
Of misery, whose melancholy walls
Seem its voracious grandeur to reproach.
Within the city bounds, the desert see.
See the rank vine o'er subterranean roofs,
Indecent, spread ; beneath whose fretted gold
It once, exulting, flow'd. The people mark,
Matchless, while fired by me ; to public good

Inexorably firm, just, generous, brave,
Afraid of nothing but unworthy life,
Elate with glory, an heroic soul
Known to the vulgar breast : behold then now
A thin despairing number, all-subdued,
The slaves of slaves, by superstition fool'd,
By vice unmann'd, and a licentious rule,
In guile ingenious, and in murder brave.
Such in one land, beneath the same fair clime,
Thy sons, Oppression, are ; and such were mine.

Even with thy labour'd pomp, for whose vain show
Deluded thousands starve ; all age-begrimed,
Torn, robb'd, and scatter'd in unnumber'd sacks,
And by the tempest of two thousand years
Continual shaken, let my ruins vie :
These roads that yet the Roman hand assert,
Beyond the weak repair of modern toil ;
These fractured arches, that the chiding stream
No more delighted hear ; these rich remains
Of marbles now unknown, where shines imbibed
Each parent ray ; these massy columns, hew'd
From Afric's farthest shore ; one granite all,
These obelisks high-towering to the sky,
Mysterious mark'd with dark Egyptian lore ;
These endless wonders that this sacred way*
Illumine still, and consecrate to fame ;
These fountains, vases, urns, and statues, charged
With the fine stores of art-completing Greece.
Mine is, besides, thy every later boast ;
Thy Buonarotist†, thy Palladiost‡ mine ;
And mine the fair designs, which Raphael's§ soul
O'er the live canvass, emanating, breathed.

What would you say, ye conquerors of earth !
Ye Romans ! could you raise the laurel'd head ;
Could you the country see, by seas of blood,
And the dread toil of ages, won so dear ;
Your pride, your triumph, your supreme delight !
For whose defence oft, in the doubtful hour,
You rush'd with rapture down the gulf of fate,
Of death ambitious ! till by awful deeds,
Virtues, and courage, that amaze mankind,
The queen of nations rose ; possess'd of all
Which nature, art, and glory could bestow :
What would you say, deep in the last abyss
Of slavery, vice, and unambitious want,
Thus to behold her sunk ? Your crowded plains,
Void of their cities ; unadorn'd your hills ;
Ungraced your lakes ; your ports to ships unknown ;
Your lawless floods, and your abandon'd streams :
These could you know ? these could you love again ?
Thy Tibur, Horace, could it now inspire
Content, poetic ease, and rural joy,
Soon bursting into song : while through the groves
Of headlong Anio, dashing to the vale,
In many a tortured stream, you mused along ?
Yon wild retreat‡, where superstition dreams,
Could, Tully, you your Tusculum believe ?
And could you deem yon naked hills, that form,
Famed in old song, the ship-forsaken bay§,
Your Formian shore ? once the delight of earth,
Where art and nature, ever-smiling, join'd

* Via Sacra.

† M. Angelo Buonaroti, Palladio, and Raphael d'Urbino ; the three great modern masters in sculpture, architecture, and painting.

‡ Tusculum is reckoned to have stood at a place now called Grotta Ferrata, a convent of monks.

§ The bay of Mola (anciently Formie) into which Homer brings Ulysses and his companions. Near Formie Cicero had a villa.

On the gay land to lavish all their stores.
 How changed, how vacant, Virgil, wide around,
 Would now your Naples seem ? Disaster'd less
 By black Vesuvius thundering o'er the coast,
 His midnight earthquakes, and his mining fires,
 Than by despotic rage* : that inward gnaws,
 A native foe ; a foreign, tears without.
 First from your flatter'd Cæsars this began :
 Till, doom'd to tyrants an eternal prey,
 Thin-peopled spreads, at last, the syren plaint,
 That the dire soul of Hannibal disarm'd ;
 And wrapt in weeds the shore of Venus† lies.
 There Baïæ sees no more the joyous throng ;
 Her bank all beaming with the pride of Rome :
 No generous vines now bask along the hills,
 Where sport the breezes of the Tyrrhene main :
 With baths and temples mixt, no villas rise ;
 Nor, art-sustain'd amid reluctant waves,
 Draw the cool murmurs of the breathing deep :
 No spreading ports their sacred arms extend :
 No mighty moles the big intrusive storm,
 From the calm station, roll resounding back.
 An almost total desolation sits,
 A dreary stillness, saddening o'er the coast ;
 Where, when soft suns and tepid winters rose,
 Rejoicing crowds inhaled the balm of peace ;
 Where city'd hill to hill reflected blaze ;
 And where, with Ceres, Bacchus wont to hold
 A genial strife§. Her youthful form, robust,
 Even Nature yields ; by fire, and earthquake rent :
 Whole stately cities in the dark abrupt
 Swallow'd at once, or vile in rubbish laid,
 A nest for serpents ; from the red abyss
 New hills, explosive, thrown ; the Lucrine lake
 A reedy pool ; and all to Cuma's point,
 The sea recovering his usurp'd domain,
 And pour'd triumphant o'er the buried dome.
 Hence, Britain, learn ; my best-establish'd, last,
 And more than Greece, or Rome, my steady reign ;
 The land where, king and people equal bound
 By guardian laws, my fullest blessings flow ;
 And where my jealous unsubmitting soul,
 The dread of tyrants ! burns in every breast :
 Learn hence, if such the miserable fate
 Of an heroic race, the masters once
 Of human-kind ; what, when deprived of me,
 How grievous must be thine ? In spite of climes,
 Whose sun-enliven'd ether wakes the soul
 To higher powers ; in spite of happy soils,
 That, but by labour's slightest aid impell'd,
 With treasures teem to thy cold clime unknown ;
 If there desponding fail the common arts,
 And sustenance of life : could life itself,
 Far less a thoughtless tyrant's hollow pomp,
 Subsist with thee ? Against depressing skies,
 Join'd to full-spread oppression's cloudy brow,

How could thy spirits hold ? where vigour find,
 Forced fruits to tear from their unnative soil ?
 Or, storing every harvest in thy ports,
 To plough the dreadful all-producing wave ?

Here paused the goddess. By the pause assured,
 In trembling accents thus I moved my prayer.
 "Oh, first, and most benevolent of powers !
 Come from eternal splendours, here on earth,
 Against despotic pride, and rage, and lust,
 To shield mankind ! to raise them to assert
 The native rights and honour of their race :
 Teach me thy lowest subject, but in zeal
 Yielding to none, the progress of thy reign,
 And with a strain from thee enrich the Muse.
 As thee alone she serves, her patron, thou,
 And great inspirer be ! then will she joy
 Through narrow life her lot, and private shade :
 And when her venal voice she barter's vile,
 Or to thy open or thy secret foes,
 May ne'er those sacred raptures touch her more,
 By slavish hearts unfelt ! and may her song
 Sink in oblivion with the nameless crew !
 Vermin of state ! to thy o'erflowing light
 That owe their being, yet betray thy cause."

Then, condescending kind, the heavenly Power
 Return'd.—"What here, suggested by the scene,
 I slight unfold, record and sing at home,
 In that blest isle, where (so we spirits move)
 With one quick effort of my will I am.
 There Truth, unlicensed, walks ; and dares accost
 Even kings themselves, the monarchs of the free !
 Fix'd on my rock, there, an indulgent race
 O'er Britons wield the sceptre of their choice :
 And there, to finish what his sires began,
 A prince behold ! for me who burns sincere,
 Even with a subject's zeal. He my great work
 Will parent-like sustain ; and added give
 The touch, the Graces and the Muses owe.
 For Britain's glory swells his panting breast ;
 And ancient arts he emulous revolves :
 His pride to let the smiling heart abroad,
 Through clouds of pomp, that but conceal the man ;
 To please, his pleasure ; bounty his delight ;
 And all the soul of Titus dwells in him."

Hail, glorious theme ! But how, alas ! shall verse,
 From the crude stores of mortal language drawn,
 How faint and tedious, sing, what piercing deep,
 The goddess flash'd at once upon my soul ?
 For, clear precision all, the tongue of gods
 Is harmony itself ; to every ear
 Familiar known, like light to every eye.
 Meantime disclosing ages, as she spoke,
 In long succession pour'd their empires forth ;
 Scene after scene, the human drama spread ;
 And still the embodied picture rose to sight.

Oh thou ! to whom the Muses owe their flame ;
 Who bidd'st, beneath the pole, Parnassus rise,
 And Hippocrene flow ; with thy bold ease,
 The striking force, the lightning of thy thought,
 And thy strong phrase, that rolls profound and
 clear ;

Oh, gracious goddess ! re-inspire my song ;
 While I, to nobler than poetic fame
 Aspiring, thy commands to Britons bear.

* Naples, then under the Austrian government.

† Campagna Felice, adjoining to Capua.

‡ The coast of Baïæ, which was formerly adorned with the works mentioned in the following lines ; and where, amidst many magnificent ruins, those of a temple erected to Venus are still to be seen.

§ All along this coast, the ancient Romans had their winter retreats ; and several populous cities stood.

GREECE;

BEING

THE SECOND PART OF LIBERTY, A POEM.

CONTENTS.

LIBERTY traced from the pastoral ages, and the first uniting of neighbouring families into civil government. The several establishments of Liberty, in Egypt, Persia, Phœnicia, Palestine, slightly touched upon, down to her great establishment in Greece. Geographical description of Greece. Sparta, and Athens, the two principal states of Greece, described. Influence of Liberty over all the Grecian states; with regard to their government, their politeness, their virtues, their arts and sciences. The vast superiority it gave them, in point of force and bravery, over the Persians, exemplified by the action of Thermopylae, the battle of Marathon, and the retreat of the Ten Thousand. Its full exertion and most beautiful effects in Athens. Liberty the source of free philosophy. The various schools, which took their rise from Socrates. Enumeration of fine arts: eloquence, poetry, music, sculpture, painting, and architecture; the effects of Liberty in Greece, and brought to their utmost perfection there. Transition to the modern state of Greece. Why Liberty declined, and was at last entirely lost among the Greeks. Concluding reflection.

THUS spoke the goddess of the fearless eye;
And at her voice, renew'd, the Vision rose.

First, in the dawn of time, with Eastern swains,
In woods, and tents, and cottages, I lived;
While on from plain to plain they led their flocks,
In search of clearer spring, and fresher field.
Those, as increasing families disclosed
The tender state, I taught an equal sway.
Few were offences, properties, and laws.
Beneath the rural portal, palm-o'erspread,
The father-senate met. There Justice dealt,
With reason then and equity the same,
Free as the common air, her prompt decree;
Nor yet had stain'd her sword with subjects' blood.
The simpler arts were all their simple wants
Had urged to light. But instant, these supplied,
Another set of fonder wants arose,
And other arts with them of finer aim;
Till, from refining want to want impell'd,
The mind by thinking push'd her latent powers,
And life began to glow, and arts to shine.

At first, on brutes alone the rustic war
Launch'd the rude spear; swift, as he glared along,
On the grim lion, or the robber-wolf.
For then young sportive life was void of toil,
Demanding little, and with little pleased:
But when to manhood grown, and endless joys,
Led on by equal toils, the bosom fired;
Lewd lazy rapine broke primeval peace,
And, hid in caves and idle forests drear,
From the lone pilgrim and the wandering swain

Seized what he durst not earn. Then brother's
blood

First, horrid, smoked on the polluted skies.
Awful in justice, then the burning youth,
Led by their temper'd sires, on lawless men,
The last worst monsters of the shaggy wood,
Turn'd the keen arrow, and the sharpen'd spear.
Then war grew glorious. Heroes then arose;
Who, scorning coward self, for others lived,
Toil'd for their ease, and for their safety bled.
West with the living day to Greece I came:
Earth smiled beneath my beam: the Muse before
Sonorous flew, that low till then in woods
Had tun'd the reed, and sigh'd the shepherd's pain;
But now, to sing heroic deeds, she swell'd
A nobler note, and bade the banquet burn.

For Greece my sons of Egypt I forsook;
A boastful race, that in the vain abyss
Of fabled ages loved to lose their source,
And with their river traced it from the skies.
While there my laws alone despotic reign'd,
And king, as well as people, proud obey'd;
I taught them science, virtue, wisdom, arts;
By poets, sages, legislators sought;
The school of polish'd life, and human-kind.
But when mysterious Superstition came,
And, with her civil sister* leagu'd, involved
In studied darkness the desponding mind;
Then tyrant power the righteous scourge unloosed:
For yielding reason speaks the soul a slave.
Instead of useful works, like nature's, great,
Enormous, cruel wonders crush'd the land;
And round a tyrant's tomb†, who none deserved,
For one vile carcass perish'd countless lives.
Then the great dragon‡, couch'd amid his floods,
Swell'd his fierce heart, and cried—"This flood is
"Tis I that bid it flow."—But, undecieved, [mine,
His frenzy soon the proud blasphemer felt;
Felt that, without my fertilising power,
Suns lost their force, and Niles o'erflow'd in vain.
Nought could retard me: nor the frugal state
Of rising Persia, sober in extreme,
Beyond the pitch of man, and thence reserved
Into luxurious waste: nor yet the ports
Of old Phœnicia; first for letters famed,
That paint the voice, and silent speak to sight,
Of arts prime source, and guardian! by fair stars,
First tempted out into the lonely deep;
To whom I first disclosed mechanic arts,
The winds to conquer, to subdue the waves,
With all the peaceful power of ruling trade;

* Civil tyranny.

† The Pyramids.

‡ The tyrants of Egypt.

Earnest of Britain. Nor by these retain'd ;
Nor by the neighbouring land, whose palmy shore
The silver Jordan laves : before me lay
The promised Land of Arts, and urged my flight.

Hail Nature's utmost boast ! unrival'd Greece !
My fairest reign ! where every power benign
Conspired to blow the flower of human-kind,
And lavish'd all that genius can inspire.
Clear sunny climates, by the breezy main,
Ionian or Ægean, temper'd by kind :
Light, airy soils : a country rich, and gay ;
Broke into hills with balmy odours crown'd,
And, bright with purple harvest, joyous vales :
Mountains and streams, where verse spontaneous
flow'd ;

Whence deem'd by wondering men the seat of gods,
And still the mountains and the streams of song.
All that boon nature could luxuriant pour
Of high materials, and my restless Arts
Frame into finish'd life. How many states,
And clustering towns, and monuments of fame,
And scenes of glorious deeds, in little bounds !
From the rough tract of bending mountains, beat
By Adria's here, there by Ægean waves ;
To where the deep-adorning Cyclade Isles
In shining prospect rise, and on the shore
Of finest Crete resounds the Lybian main.

O'er all two rival cities rear'd the brow,
And balanced all. Spread on Eurotas* bank,
Amid a circle of soft-rising hills,
The patient Sparta one : the sober, hard,
And man-subduing city ; which no shape
Of pain could conquer, nor of pleasure charm.
Lycurgus there built, on the solid base
Of equal life, so well a temper'd state ;
Where mix'd each government, in such just poise ;
Each power so checking, and supporting, each ;
That firm for ages, and unmoved, it stood,
The fort of Greece ! without one giddy hour,
One shock of faction, or of party rage.
For, drain'd the springs of wealth, corruption there
Lay wither'd at the root. Thrice happy land !
Had not neglected art, with weedy vice
Confounded, sunk. But if Athenian arts
Loved not the soil ; yet there the calm abode
Of wisdom, virtue, philosophic ease,
Of manly sense and wit, in frugal phrase
Confined, and press'd into Laconic force.
There too, by rooting thence still treacherous self,
The public and the private grew the same.
The children of the nursing public all,
And at its table fed, for that they toil'd,
For that they lived entire, and even for that
The tender mother urged her son to die.

Of softer genius, but not less intent
To seize the palm of empire, Athens rose.
Where, with bright marbles big and future pomp,
Hymettus* spread, amid the scented sky,
His thymy treasures to the labouring bee,
And to botanic hand the stores of health ;
Wrapt in a soul-attenuating clime,
Between Ilissus and Cephissus† glow'd
This hive of science, shedding sweets divine,
Of active arts, and animated arms.
There, passionate for me, an easy-moved,
A quick, refined, a delicate, humane,
Enlighten'd people reign'd. Oft on the brink
Of ruin, hurried by the charm of speech,

* A mountain near Athens.

† Two rivers, betwixt which Athens was situated.

Enforcing hasty counsel immature,
Totter'd the rash democracy ; unpoised,
And by the rage devour'd, that ever tears
A populace unequal ; part too rich,
And part or fierce with want or abject grown.
Solon, at last, their mild restorer, rose :
Allay'd the tempest ; to the calm of laws
Reduced the settling whole ; and, with the weight
Which the two senates* to the public lent,
As with an anchor fix'd the driving state.

Nor was my forming care to these confined.
For emulation through the whole I pour'd,
Noble contention ! who should most excel
In government well-poised, adjusted best
To public weal : in countries cultured high :
In ornamented towns, where order reigns,
Free social life, and polish'd manners fair :
In exercise, and arms ; arms only drawn
For common Greece, to quell the Persian pride :
In moral science, and in graceful arts.
Hence, as for glory peacefully they strove,
The prize grew greater, and the prize of all.
By contest brighten'd, hence the radiant youth
Pour'd every beam ; by generous pride inflamed,
Felt every ardour burn : their great reward
The verdant wreath, which sounding Pisa† gave.

Hence flourish'd Greece ; and hence a race of men,
As gods by conscious future times adored :
In whom each virtue wore a smiling air,
Each science shed o'er life a friendly light,
Each art was nature. Spartan valour hence,
At the famed pass‡ firm as an isthmus stood ;
And the whole eastern ocean, waving far
As eye could dart its vision, nobly check'd.
While in extended battle, at the field
Of Marathon, my keen Athenians drove
Before their ardent band an host of slaves.

Hence through the continent ten thousand Greeks
Urged a retreat, whose glory not the prime
Of victories can reach. Deserts, in vain,
Opposed their course ; and hostile lands, unknown ;
And deep rapacious floods, dire-bank'd with death ;
And mountains, in whose jaws destruction grinn'd,
Hunger, and toil ; Armenian snows, and storms ;
And circling myriads still of barbarous foes.
Greece in their view, and glory yet untouch'd,
Their steady column pierced the scattering herds,
Which a whole empire pour'd ; and held its way
Triumphant, by the Sage-exalted Chief §
Fired and sustain'd. Oh light and force of mind,
Almost almighty in severe extremes !
The sea at last from Colchian mountains seen,
Kind-hearted transport round their captains threw
The soldier's fond embrace ; o'erflow'd their eyes
With tender floods, and loosed the general voice
To cries resounding loud—The sea ! The sea !

In Attic bounds hence heroes, sages, wits,
Shone thick as stars, the milky-way of Greece !
And though gay wit, and pleasing grace was theirs,
All the soft modes of elegance and ease ;
Yet was not courage less, the patient touch
Of toiling art, and disquisition deep.

* The Areopagus, or supreme court of judicature, which Solon reformed, and improved : and the council of four hundred, by him instituted. In this council all affairs of state were deliberated, before they came to be voted in the assembly of the people.

† Or Olympia, the city where the Olympic games were celebrated.

‡ The straits of Thermopylæ.

§ Xenophon.

My Spirit pours a vigour through the soul,
 The unfetter'd thought with energy inspires,
 Invincible in arts, in the bright field
 Of nobler science, as in that of arms.
 Athenians thus not less intrepid burst
 The bonds of tyrant darkness, than they spurn'd
 The Persian chains : while through the city, full
 Of mirthful quarrel and of witty war,
 Incessant struggled taste refining taste,
 And friendly free discussion, calling forth
 From the fair jewel Truth its latent ray.
 O'er all shone out the great Athenian Sage*,
 And father of philosophy : the sun,
 From whose white blaze emerged each various sect
 Took various tints, but with diminish'd beam.
 Tutor of Athens ! he, in every street,
 Dealt priceless treasure : goodness his delight,
 Wisdom his wealth, and glory his reward.
 Deep through the human heart, with playful art,
 His simple question stole ; as into truth,
 And serious deeds, he smiled the laughing race ;
 Taught moral happy life, whate'er can bless,
 Or grace mankind ; and what he taught he was.
 Compounded high, though plain, his doctrine broke
 In different Schools. The bold poetic phrase
 Of figured Plato ; Xenophon's pure strain,
 Like the clear brook that steals along the vale ;
 Dissecting truth, the Stagyrity's keen eye ;
 The exalted Stoic pride ; the Cynic sneer ;
 The slow-consenting Academic doubt ;
 And, joining bliss to virtue, the glad ease
 Of Epicurus, seldom understood.
 They, ever-candid, reason still opposed
 To reason ; and, since virtue was their aim,
 Each by sure practice tried to prove his way
 The best. Then stood untouched the solid base
 Of Liberty, the Liberty of Mind :
 For systems yet, and soul-enslaving creeds,
 Slept with the monsters of succeeding times.
 From priestly darkness sprung the enlightening arts
 Of fire, and sword, and rage, and horrid names.

O Greece ! thou sapient nurse of Finer Arts !
 Which to bright science blooming fancy bore,
 Be this thy praise, that thou, and thou alone,
 In these hast led the way, in these excell'd,
 Crown'd with the laurel of assenting time.

In thy full language, speaking mighty things ;
 Like a clear torrent close, or else diffused
 A broad majestic stream, and rolling on
 Through all the winding harmony of sound :
 In it the power of Eloquence, at large,
 Breathed the persuasive or pathetic soul ;
 Still'd by degrees the democratic storm,
 Or bade it threatening rise, and tyrants shook,
 Flush'd at the head of their victorious troops.
 In it the Muse, her fury never quench'd
 By mean unyielding phrase, or jarring sound,
 Her unconfined divinity display'd ;
 And, still harmonious, form'd it to her will :
 Or soft depress'd it to the shepherd's moan,
 Or raised it swelling to the tongue of gods.

Heroic song was thine ; the Fountain-Bard†,
 Whence each poetic stream derives its course.
 Thine the dread moral scene, thy chief delight !
 Where idle fancy durst not mix her voice,
 When reason spoke august ; the fervent heart
 Or plain'd, or storm'd ; and in the impassion'd man,
 Concealing art with art, the poet sunk.
 This potent school of manners, but when left

To loose neglect, a land-corrupting plague,
 Was not unworthy deem'd of public care
 And boundless cost, by thee ; whose every son,
 Even last mechanic, the true taste possess'd
 Of what had flavour to the nourish'd soul.

The sweet enforcer of the poet's strain,
 Thine was the meaning Music of the heart ;
 Not the vain trill, that, void of passion, runs
 In giddy mazes, tickling idle ears ;
 But that deep-searching voice, and artful hand,
 To which respondent shakes the varied soul.

Thy fair ideas, thy delightful forms,
 By love imagined, by the graces touch'd,
 The boast of well-pleased nature ! Sculpture seized,
 And bade them ever smile in Parian stone.
 Selecting Beauty's choice, and that again
 Exalting, blending in a perfect whole,
 Thy workmen left even nature's self behind.
 From those far different, whose prolific hand
 Peoples a nation ; they for years on years,
 By the cool touches of judicious toil,
 Their rapid genius curbing, pour'd it all
 Through the live features of one breathing stone.
 There, beaming full, it shone ; expressing gods :
 Jove's awful brow, Apollo's air divine,
 The fierce atrocious frown of sinew'd Mars,
 Or the sly graces of the Cyprian Queen.
 Minutely perfect all ! Each dimple sunk,
 And every muscle swell'd, as nature taught.
 In tresses, braided gay, the marble waved ;
 Flow'd in loose robes, or thin transparent veils ;
 Sprung into motion ; soften'd into flesh ;
 Was fired to passion, or refined to soul.

Nor less thy Pencil, with creative touch,
 Shed mimic life, when all thy brightest dames,
 Assembled, Zeuxis in his Helen mix'd ;
 And when Apelles, who peculiar knew
 To give a grace that more than mortal smiled,
 The soul of beauty ! call'd the queen of love,
 Fresh from the billows, blushing orient charms.
 Even such enchantment then thy pencil pour'd,
 That cruel-thoughted War, the impatient torch
 Dash'd to the ground ; and, rather than destroy
 The patriot picture*, let the city 'scape.

First elder Sculpture taught her sister art
 Correct design ; where great ideas shone,
 And in the secret trace expression spoke :
 Taught her the graceful attitude ; the turn,
 And bateous airs of head ; the native act,
 Or bold, or easy ; and, east free behind,
 The swelling mantle's well-adjusted flow.
 Then the bright Muse, their eldest sister, came ;
 And bade her follow where she led the way :
 Bade earth, and sea, and air, in colours rise ;
 And copious action on the canvass glow ;
 Gave her gay fable ; spread invention's store ;
 Enlarged her view ; taught composition high,
 And just arrangement, circling round one point,
 That starts to sight, binds and commands the whole.
 Caught from the heavenly Muse a nobler aim,
 And scorning the soft trade of mere delight,
 O'er all thy temples, porticoes, and schools,
 Heroic deeds she traced, and warm display'd
 Each mortal beauty to the ravish'd eye.

* When Demetrius besieged Rhodes, and could have reduced the city, by setting fire to that quarter of it where stood the house of the celebrated Protogenes ; he chose rather to raise the siege, than hazard the burning of a famous picture called Jalytus, the masterpiece of that painter.

* Socrates.

† Homer.

There, as the imagined presence of the god
Aroused the mind, or vacant hours induced
Calm contemplation, or assembled youth
Burn'd in ambitious circle round the sage,
The living lesson stole into the heart,
With more prevailing force than dwells in words.
These rouse to glory ; while, to rural life,
The softer canvass oft reposed the soul.
There gaily broke the sun-illumin'd cloud ;
The lessening prospect, and the mountain blue,
Vanish'd in air ; the precipice frown'd, dire ;
White, down the rock, the rushing torrent dash'd ;
The sun shone, trembling, o'er the distant main ;
The tempest foam'd, immense ; the driving storm
Sadden'd the skies, and, from the doubling gloom,
On the scathed oak the ragged lightning fell ;
In closing shades, and where the current strays,
With peace, and love, and innocence around,
Piped the lone shepherd to his feeding flock :
Round happy parents smiled their younger selves ;
And friends conversed, by death divided long.

To public virtue thus the smiling arts,
Unblemish'd handmaids, served ; the graces they
To dress this fairest Venus. Thus revered,
And placed beyond the reach of sordid care,
The high awarers of immortal fame,
Alone for glory thy great masters strove ;
Court'd by kings, and by contending states
Assumed the boasted honour of their birth.

In Architecture too thy rank supreme !
That art where most magnificent appears
The little builder man ; by thee refined,
And, smiling high, to full perfection brought.
Such thy sure rules, that Goths of every age,
Who scorn'd their aid, have only loaded earth
With labour'd heavy monuments of shame :
Not those gay domes that o'er thy splendid shore
Shot, all proportion, up. First unadorn'd,
And nobly plain, the manly Doric rose ;
The Ionic then, with decent matron grace,
Her airy pillar heaved ; luxuriant last,
The rich Corinthian spread her wanton wreath :
The whole so measured true, so lessen'd off
By fine proportion, that the marble pile,
Form'd to repel the still or stormy waste
Of rolling ages, light as fabrics look'd
That from the magic wand aerial rise.

These were the wonders that illumined Greece,
From end to end——Here interrupting warm,
Where are they now ? (I cried,) say, goddess, where?
And what the land thy darling thus of old ?
Sunk ! she resumed ; deep in the kindred gloom
Of superstition, and of slavery, sunk !
No glory now can touch their hearts, benumb'd
By loose dejected sloth and servile fear ;
No science pierce the darkness of their minds ;
No nobler art the quick ambitious soul
Of imitation in their breast awake.
Even, to supply the needful arts of life,
Mechanic toil denies the hopeless hand.
Scarce any trace remaining, vestige grey,
Or nodding column on the desert shore,
To point where Corinth, or where Athens stood.
A faithless land of violence, and death !
Where commerce parleys, dubious, on the shore ;
And his wild impulse curious search restrains,
Afraid to trust the inhospitable clime.
Neglected nature fails ; in sordid want
Sunk, and debased, their beauty beams no more.
The sun himself seems, angry to regard,

Of light unworthy, the degenerate race ;
And fires them oft with pestilential rays :
While earth, blue poison steaming on the skies,
Indignant, shakes them from her troubled sides.
But as from man to man, fate's first decree,
Impartial death the tide of riches rolls,
So states must die and Liberty go round.

Fierce was the stand, ere virtue, valour, arts,
And the soul fired by me (that often, stung
With thoughts of better times and old renown,
From hydra-tyrants tried to clear the land)
Lay quite extinct in Greece, their works effaced,
And gross o'er all, unfeeling bondage spread.
Sooner I moved my much-reluctant flight,
Poised on the doubtful wing : when Greece with

Greece

Embroil'd in foul contention fought no more
For common glory, and for common weal :
But false to freedom, sought to quell the free ;
Broke the firm band of peace, and sacred love,
That lent the whole irrefragable force ;
And, as around the partial trophy blush'd,
Prepared the way for total overthrow.
Then to the Persian power, whose pride they scorn'd,
When Xerxes pour'd his millions o'er the land,
Sparta, by turns, and Athens, vilely sued ;
Sued to be venal parricides, to spill
Their country's bravest blood, and on themselves
To turn their matchless mercenary arms.
Peaceful in Susa, then, sat the Great King* ;
And by the trick of treaties, the still waste
Of sly corruption, and barbaric gold,
Effected what his steel could ne'er perform.
Profuse he gave them the luxurious draught,
Inflaming all the land : unbalanced wide
Their tottering states ; their wild assemblies ruled,
As the winds turn at every blast the seas :
And by their listed orators, whose breath
Still with a factious storm infested Greece,
Roused them to civil war, or dash'd them down
To sordid peace——† Peace ! that, when Sparta shook
Astonish'd Artaxerxes on his throne,
Gave up, fair-spread o'er Asia's sunny shore,
Their kindred cities to perpetual chains.
What could so base, so infamous a thought
In Spartan hearts inspire ? Jealous, they saw
Respiring Athens‡ rear again her walls ;
And the pale fury fired them, once again
To crush this rival city to the dust.
For now no more the noble social soul
Of Liberty my families combined ;
But by short views, and selfish passions, broke,
Dire as when friends are rankled into foes,
They mix'd severe, and waged eternal war :
Nor felt they, furious, their exhausted force ;
Nor, with false glory, discord, madness blind,
Saw how the blackening storm from Thracia came.
Long years roll'd on, by many a battle stain'd,
The blush and boast of fame ! where courage, art,
And military glory shone supreme :
But let detesting ages, from the scene

* So the kings of Persia were called by the Greeks.

† The peace made by Antalcidas, the Lacedæmonian admiral, with the Persians ; by which the Lacedæmonians abandoned all the Greeks established in the Lesser Asia to the dominion of the king of Persia.

‡ Athens had been dismantled by the Lacedæmonians, at the end of the first Peloponnesian war, and was at this time restored by Conon to its former splendour.

§ The Peloponnesian war.

Of Greece self-mangled, turn the sickening eye.
At last, when, bleeding from a thousand wounds,
She felt her spirits fail ; and in the dust
Her latest heroes, Nicias, Conon, lay,
Agasilaus, and the Theban Friends * :
The Macedonian vulture mark'd his time,
By the dire scent of Cheronæa † lured,
And, fierce-descending, seized his hapless prey.

Thus tame submitted to the victor's yoke
Greece, once the gay, the turbulent, the bold ;
For every grace, and muse, and science born ;
With arts of war, of government, elate ;
To tyrants dreadful, dreadful to the best ;
Whom I myself could scarcely rule : and thus

The Persian fetters, that intrall'd the mind,
Were turn'd to formal and apparent chains.

Unless corruption first deject the pride,
And guardian vigour of the free-born soul,
All crude attempts of violence are vain ;
For firm within, and while at heart untouch'd,
Ne'er yet by force was freedom overcome.
But soon as independence stoops the head,
To vice enslaved, and vice-created wants ;
Then to some foul corrupting hand, whose waste
These heighten'd wants with fatal bounty feeds :
From man to man the slackening ruin runs,
Till the whole state unnerved in slavery sinks.

ROME ;

BEING

THE THIRD PART OF LIBERTY, A POEM.

CONTENTS.

As this Part contains a description of the establishment of Liberty in Rome, it begins with a view of the Grecian colonies settled in the southern parts of Italy, which with Sicily constituted the Great Greece of the ancients. With these colonies the spirit of Liberty, and of republics, spreads over Italy. Transition to Pythagoras and his philosophy, which he taught through those free states and cities. Amidst the many small republics in Italy, Rome the destined seat of Liberty. Her establishment there dated from the expulsion of the Tarquins. How differing from that in Greece. Reference to a view of the Roman republic given in the first part of this poem ; to mark its rise and fall the peculiar purport of this. During its first ages, the greatest force of Liberty, and virtue, exerted. The source whence derived the heroic virtues of the Romans. Enumeration of these virtues. Thence their security at home ; their glory, success, and empire, abroad. Bounds of the Roman empire geographically described. The states of Greece restored to Liberty, by Titus Quintus Flaminus, the highest instance of public generosity and beneficence. The loss of Liberty in Rome. Its causes, progress, and completion in the death of Brutus. Rome under the Emperors. From Rome the Goddess of Liberty goes among the northern nations ; where, by infusing into her spirit and general principles, she lays the groundwork of her future establishments ; sends them in vengeance on the Roman empire, now totally enslaved ; and then, with arts and sciences in her train, quits earth during the dark ages. The celestial regions, to which Liberty retired, not proper to be opened to the view of mortals.

HERE melting mix'd with air the ideal forms,
That painted still whate'er the goddess sung.
Then I, impatient—"From extinguish'd Greece,
To what new region stream'd the Human Day ?"
She softly sighing, as when Zephyr leaves,
Resign'd to Boreas, the declining year,
Resumed.—Indignant, these last scenes ‡ I fled ;
And long ere then, Leucadia's cloudy cliff,

* Pelopidas, and Epaminondas.

† The battle of Cheronæa, in which Philip of Macedon utterly defeated the Greeks.

‡ The last struggles of Liberty in Greece.

And the Ceraunian hills behind me thrown,
All Latium stood aroused. Ages before,
Great mother of republics ! Greece had pour'd,
Swarm after swarm, her ardent youth around.
On Asia, Afric, Sicily, they stoop'd,
But chief on fair Hesperia's winding shore ;
Where, from Lacinium* to Etrurian vales,
They roll'd increasing colonies along,
And lent materials for my Roman reign.
With them my spirit spread ; and numerous states,
And cities rose, on Grecian models form'd ;
As its parental policy, and arts,
Each had imbibed. Besides, to each assign'd
A guardian genius, o'er the public weal,
Kept an unclosing eye ; tried to sustain,
Or more, sublime the soul infused by me :
And strong the battle rose, with various wave,
Against the tyrant demons of the land.
Thus they their little wars and triumphs knew ;
Their flows of fortune, and receding times,
But almost all below the proud regard
Of story vow'd to Rome, on deeds intent,
That truth beyond the flight of fable bore.

Not so the Samian sage † ; to him belongs
The brightest witness of recording fame.
For these free states his native isle ‡ forsook,
And a vain tyrant's transitory smile,
He sought Crotona's pure salubrious air,
And through Great Greece § his gentle wisdom taught ;
Wisdom that calm'd for listening years ¶ the mind,
Nor ever heard amid the storm of zeal.
His mental eye first launch'd into the deeps
Of boundless ether ; where unnumber'd orbs,
Myriads on myriads, through the pathless sky
Unerring roll, and wind their steady way.
There he the full consenting choir beheld ;
There first discern'd the secret band of love,

* A promontory in Calabria.

† Pythagoras.

‡ Samos, over which then reigned the tyrant Polycrates.

§ The southern parts of Italy and Sicily, so called because of the Grecian colonies there settled.

¶ His scholars were enjoined silence for five years.

The kind attraction, that to central suns
 Binds circling earths, and world with world unites.
 Instructed thence he great ideas form'd
 Of the whole-moving, all-informing God,
 The Sun of beings ! beaming unconfin'd
 Light, life, and love, and ever-active power :
 Whom nought can image, and who best approves
 The silent worship of the moral heart,
 That joys in bounteous Heaven, and spreads the joy.
 Nor scorn'd the soaring sage to stoop to life,
 And bound his reason to the sphere of man.
 He gave the four yet reigning virtues* name ;
 Inspired the study of the finer arts,
 That civilis'd mankind, and laws devis'd
 Where with enlighten'd justice mercy mix'd.
 He even, into his tender system, took
 Whatever shares the brotherhood of life :
 He taught that life's indissoluble flame,
 From brute to man, and man to brute again,
 For ever shifting, runs the eternal round ;
 Thence tried against the blood-polluted meal,
 And limbs yet quivering with some kindred soul,
 To turn the human heart. Delightful truth !
 Had he beheld the living chain ascend,
 And not a circling form, but rising whole.

Amid these small republics one arose,
 On yellow Tiber's bank, almighty Rome,
 Fated for me. A nobler spirit warm'd
 Her sons ; and, roused by tyrants, nobler still
 It burn'd in Brutus ; the proud Tarquins chased
 With all their crimes ; bade radiant eras rise,
 And the long honours of the consul-line.

Here from the fairer, not the greater, plan
 Of Greece I varied ; whose unmixing states,
 By the keen soul of emulation pierced,
 Long waged alone the bloodless war of arts,
 And their best empire gain'd. But to diffuse
 O'er men an empire was my purpose now :
 To let my martial majesty abroad ;
 Into the vortex of one state to draw
 The whole mix'd force, and liberty, on earth ;
 To conquer tyrants, and set nations free.

Already have I given, with flying touch,
 A broken view of this my amplest reign.
 Now, while its first, last, periods you survey,
 Mark how it labouring rose, and rapid fell.

When Rome in noon-tide empire grasp'd the
 And, soon as her resistless legions shone, [world,
 The nations stoop'd around ; though then appear'd
 Her grandeur most, yet in her dawn of power,
 By many a jealous equal people press'd,
 Then was the toil, the mighty struggle then ;
 Then for each Roman I an hero told ;
 And every passing sun, and Latian scene,
 Saw patriot virtues then, and awful deeds,
 That or surpass the faith of modern times,
 Or, if believed, with sacred horror strike.

For then, to prove my most exalted power,
 I to the point of full perfection push'd,
 To fondness and enthusiastic zeal,
 The great, the reigning passion of the free ;
 That godlike passion ! which, the bounds of self
 Divinely bursting, the whole public takes
 Into the heart, enlarged, and burning high
 With the mix'd ardour of unnumber'd selves ;
 Of all who safe beneath the voted laws
 Of the same parent state, fraternal, live.
 From this kind sun of moral nature flow'd
 Virtues, that shine the light of human-kind,

* The four cardinal virtues.

And, ray'd through story, warm remotest time.
 These virtues too, reflected to their source,
 Increased its flame. The social charm went round,
 The fair idea, more attractive still,
 As more by virtue mark'd ; till Romans, all
 One band of friends, unconquerable grew. [voice,

Hence, when their country raised her plaintive
 The voice of pleading nature was not heard ;
 And in their hearts the fathers throb'd no more :
 Stern to themselves, but gentle to the whole.

Hence sweeten'd pain, the luxury of toil ;
 Patience, that baffled fortune's utmost rage ;
 High-minded hope, which at the lowest ebb,
 When Brennus conquer'd and when Cannæ bled,
 The bravest impulse felt, and scorn'd despair.
 Hence moderation a new conquest gain'd ;
 As on the vanquish'd, like descending Heaven,
 Their dewy mercy dropp'd, their bounty beam'd,
 And by the labouring hand were crowns bestow'd.
 Fruitful of men, hence hard laborious life,
 Which no fatigue can quell, no season pierce.

Hence, independence, with his little pleased
 Serene, and self-sufficient, like a god ;
 In whom corruption could not lodge one charm,
 While he his honest roots to gold prefer'd ;
 While truly rich, and by his Sabine field
 The man maintain'd, the Roman's splendour all
 Was in the public wealth and glory placed :
 Or ready, a rough swain, to guide the plough ;
 Or else, the purple o'er his shoulder thrown,
 In long majestic flow, to rule the state,
 With wisdom's purest eye ; or, clad in steel,
 To drive the steady battle on the foe.

Hence every passion, even the proudest, stoop'd,
 To common good : Camillus, thy revenge ;
 Thy glory, Fabius. All submissive hence,
 Consuls, Dictators, still resign'd their rule,
 The very moment that the laws ordain'd.
 Though conquest o'er them clapp'd here eagle-wings,
 Her laurels wreathed, and yoked her snowy steeds
 To the triumphal car ; soon as expired
 The latest hour of sway, taught to submit,
 (A harder lesson than that to command)
 Into the private Roman sunk the chief.

If Rome was served, and glorious, careless they
 By whom. Their country's fame they deem'd their
 And above envy, in a rival's train, [own ;
 Sung the loud Iōs by themselves deserved.

Hence matchless courage. On Cremera's bank,
 Hence fell the Fabii ; hence the Decii died ;
 And Curtius plunged into the flaming gulf.
 Hence Regulus the wavering fathers firm'd,
 By dreadful counsel never given before ;
 For Roman honour sued, and his own doom.
 Hence he sustain'd to dare a death prepared
 By Punic rage. On earth his manly look
 Relentless fix'd, he from a last embrace,
 By chains polluted, put his wife aside,
 His little children climbing for a kiss ;
 Then dumb through rows of weeping wondering
 A new illustrious exile ! press'd along. [friends,

Nor less impatient did he pierce the crowds
 Opposing his return, than if, escaped
 From long litigious suits, he glad forsook
 The noisy town a while and city cloud,
 To breathe Venafrian or Tarentine air.
 Need I these high particulars recount ?
 The meanest bosom felt a thirst for fame ;
 Flight their worst death, and shame their only fear.
 Life had no charms, nor any terrors fate,

When Rome and glory call'd. But, in one view,
Mark the rare boast of these unequal'd times.
Ages revolved unsullied by a crime :
Astræa reign'd, and scarcely needed laws
To bind a race elated with the pride
Of virtue, and disdaining to descend
To meanness, mutual violence, and wrongs.
While war around them raged, in happy Rome
All peaceful smiled, all save the passing clouds
That often hang on Freedom's jealous brow ;
And fair unblemish'd centuries elapsed,
When not a Roman bled but in the field.
Their virtue such, that an unbalanced state,
Still between noble and plebeian tost,
As flow'd the wave of fluctuating power,
Was thence kept firm, and with triumphant prow
Rode out the storms. Oft though the native feuds,
That from the first their constitution shook,
(A latent ruin, growing as it grew)
Stood on the threatening point of civil war
Ready to rush : yet could the lenient voice
Of wisdom, soothing the tumultuous soul,
Those sons of virtue calm. Their generous hearts,
Unpetrified by self, so naked lay
And sensible to truth, that o'er the rage
Of giddy faction, by oppression swell'd,
Prevail'd a simple fable, and at once
To peace recover'd the divided state.
But if their often-cheated hopes refused
The soothing touch ; still, in the love of Rome,
The dread Dictator found a sure resource.
Was she assaulted ? was her glory stain'd ?
One common quarrel wide inflamed the whole.
Foes in the forum in the field were friends,
By social danger bound ; each fond for each,
And for their dearest country all, to die.

Thus up the hill of empire slow they toil'd :
Till, the bold summit gain'd, the thousand states
Of proud Italia blended into one :
Then o'er the nations they resistless rush'd,
And touch'd the limits of the failing world.

Let fancy's eye the distant lines unite.
See that which borders wild the western main,
Wherestorms at large resound, and tides immense :
From Caledonia's dim cerulean coast,
And moist Hibernia, to where Atlas, lodged
Amid the restless clouds and leaning heaven,
Hangs o'er the deep that borrows thence its name.
Mark that opposed, where first the springing morn
Her roses sheds, and shakes around her dews :
From the dire deserts by the Caspian laved,
To where the Tigris and Euphrates, join'd,
Impetuous tear the Babylonian plain ;
And blest Arabia aromatic breathes.
See that dividing far the watery north,
Parent of floods ! from the majestic Rhine,
Drunk by Batavian meads, to where, seven-mouth'd,
In Euxine waves the flashing Danube roars ;
To where the frozen Tanais scarcely stirs
The dead Mæotic pool, or the long Rha*,
In the black Scythian sea† his torrent throws.
Last, that beneath the burning zone behold.
See where it runs, from the deep-loaded plains
Of Mauritania to the Lybian sands,
Where Ammon lifts amid the torrid waste
A verdant isle with shade and fountain fresh ;
And farther to the full Egyptian shore,

To where the Nile from Ethiopian clouds,
His never-drain'd ethereal urn, descends.
In this vast space what various tongues, and states !
What bounding rocks, and mountains, floods, and seas !

What purple tyrants quell'd, and nations freed !
O'er Greece descended chief, with stealth divine,
The Roman bounty in a flood of day :
As at her Isthmian games, a fading pomp !
Her full-assembled youth innumerable swarm'd.
On a tribunal raised Flaminius sat ;
A victor he, from the deep phalanx pierced
Of iron-coated Macedon, and back
The Grecian tyrant* to his bounds repell'd.
In the high thoughtless gaiety of game,
While sport alone their unambitious hearts
Possess'd ; the sudden trumpet, sounding hoarse,
Bade silence o'er the bright assembly reign.
Then thus a herald—"To the states of Greece
The Roman people, unconfin'd, restore
Their countries, cities, liberties, and laws :
Taxes remit, and garrisons withdraw."
The crowd astonish'd half, and half inform'd,
Stared dubious round ; some question'd, some
exclaim'd,

(Like one who dreaming, between hope and fear,
Is lost in anxious joy) "Be that again,
Be that again proclaim'd, distinct, and loud."
Loud, and distinct, it was again proclaim'd ;
And still as midnight in the rural shade,
When the gale slumbers, they the words devour'd.
A while severe amazement held them mute,
Then, bursting broad, the boundless shout to heaven
From many a thousand hearts ecstasie sprung.
On every hand rebellow'd to their joy
The swelling sea, the rocks, and vocal hills :
Through all her turrets stately Corinth‡ shook ;
And, from the void above of shatter'd air,
The flitting bird fell breathless to the ground.
What piercing bliss ! how keen a sense of fame,
Did then, Flaminius, reach thy inmost soul !
And with what deep-felt glory didst thou then
Escape the fondness of transported Greece ?
Mix'd in a tempest of superior joy,
They left the sports ; like Bacchanals they flew,
Each other straining in a strict embrace,
Nor strain'd a slave ; and loud acclaims till night
Round the proconsul's tent repeated rung.
Then, crown'd with garlands, came the festive hours ;
And music, sparkling wine, and converse warm,
Their raptures waked anew—"Ye gods !" they
cried,

"Ye guardian gods of Greece ! And are we free ?
Was it not madness deem'd the very thought ?
And is it true ? How did we purchase chains !
At what a dire expense of kindred blood ?
And are they now dissolved ? And scarce one drop
For the fair first of blessings have we paid ?
Courage, and conduct, in the doubtful field,
When rages wide the storm of mingling war,
Are rare indeed ; but how to generous ends
To turn success, and conquest, rarer still :
That the great gods and Romans only know.
Lives there on earth, almost to Greece unknown,
A people so magnanimous, to quit
Their native soil, traverse the stormy deep,
And by their blood and treasure, spent for us,

* The ancient name of the Volga.

† The Caspian Sea.

* The king of Macedonia.

‡ The Isthmian games were celebrated at Corinth.

Redeem our states, our liberties, and laws ;
 There does! there does! O saviour Titus! Rome!"
 Thus through the happy night they pour'd their
 And in my last reflected beams rejoiced. [souls,
 As when the shepherd, on the mountain brow,
 Sits piping to his flocks, and gamesome kids ;
 Meantime the sun, beneath the green earth sunk,
 Slants upward o'er the scene a parting gleam :
 Short is the glory that the mountain gilds,
 Plays on the glittering flocks, and glads the swain ;
 To western worlds irrevocable roll'd,
 Rapid, the source of light recalls his ray.

Here interposing I—"Oh queen of men!
 Beneath whose sceptre in essential rights
 Equal they live ; though placed, for common good,
 Various, or in subjection or command ;
 And that by common choice : alas ! the scene,
 With virtue, freedom, and with glory bright,
 Streams into blood, and darkens into woe."
 Thus she pursued—Near this great era, Rome
 Began to feel the swift approach of fate,
 That now her vitals gain'd : still more and more
 Her deep divisions kindling into rage,
 And war with chains and desolation charged.
 From an unequal balance of her sons
 These fierce contentions sprung ; and as increased
 This hated inequality, more fierce
 They flamed to tumult. Independence fail'd ;
 Here by luxurious wants, by real there ;
 And with this virtue every virtue sunk,
 As, with the sliding rock, the pile sustain'd.
 A last attempt, too late, the Gracchi made,
 To fix the flying scale, and poise the state.
 On one side swell'd aristocratic pride ;
 With usury, the villain ! whose fell gripe
 Bends by degrees to baseness the free soul ;
 And luxury rapacious, cruel, mean,
 Mother of vice ! While on the other crept
 A populace in want, with pleasure fired ;
 Fit for proscriptions, for the darkest deeds,
 As the proud feeder bade : inconstant, blind,
 Deserting friends at need, and duped by foes ;
 Loud and seditious, when a chief inspired
 Their headlong fury, but, of him deprived,
 Already slaves that lick'd the scourging hand.

This firm republic, that against the blast
 Of opposition rose ; that (like an oak,
 Nursed on feracious Algidum, whose boughs
 Still stronger shoot beneath the rigid axe)
 By loss, by slaughter, from the steel itself,
 Even force and spirit drew ; smit with the calm,
 The dead serene of prosperous fortune, pined,
 Nought now her weighty legions could oppose ;
 Her terror* once, on Afric's tawny shore,
 Now smoked in dust, a stabling now for wolves ;
 And every dreaded power received the yoke.
 Besides, destructive, from the conquer'd east,
 In the soft plunder came that worst of plagues,
 That pestilence of mind, a fever'd thirst
 For the false joys which luxury prepares ;
 Unworthy joys ! that wasteful leave behind
 No mark of honour, in reflecting hour,
 No secret ray to glad the conscious soul ;
 At once involving in one ruin wealth,
 And wealth-acquiring powers : while stupid self,
 Of narrow gust, and hebetating sense,
 Devour the nobler faculties of bliss.
 Hence Roman virtue slacken'd into sloth ;
 Security relax'd the softening state ;

* Carthage.

And the broad eye of government lay closed.
 No more the laws inviolable reign'd,
 And public weal no more : but party raged ;
 And partial power, and licence unrestrain'd,
 Let discord through the deathful city loose.
 First, mild Tiberius*, on thy sacred head
 The fury's vengeance fell ; the first, whose blood
 Had since the consuls stain'd contending Rome.
 Of precedent pernicious ! With thee bled
 Three hundred Romans ; with thy brother, next,
 Three thousand more : till, into battles turn'd
 Debates of peace, and forced the trembling laws,
 The forum and comitia horrid grew,
 A scene of barter'd power, or reeking gore.
 When, half-ashamed, corruption's thievish arts,
 And ruffian force begin to sap the mounds
 And majesty of laws ; if not in time
 Repress'd severe, for human aid too strong
 The torrent turns, and overbears the whole.

Thus luxury, dissension, a mix'd rage
 Of boundless pleasure and of boundless wealth,
 Want wishing change, and waste repairing war,
 Rapine for ever lost to peaceful toil,
 Guilt unatoned, profuse of blood revenge,
 Corruption all avow'd, and lawless force,
 Each heightening each, alternate shook the state.
 Meantime ambition, at the dazzling head
 Of hardy legions, with the laurels heap'd
 And spoil of nations, in one circling blast
 Combined in various storm, and from its base
 The broad republic tore. By virtue built
 It touch'd the skies, and spread o'er shelter'd earth
 An ample roof : by virtue too sustain'd,
 And balanced steady, every tempest sung
 Innoxious by, or bade it firmer stand.
 But when, with sudden and enormous change,
 The first of mankind sunk into the last,
 As once in virtue, so in vice extreme,
 This universal fabric yielded loose,
 Before ambition still ; and thundering down,
 At last, beneath its ruins crush'd a world.
 A conquering people, to themselves a prey,
 Must ever fall ; when their victorious troops,
 In blood and rapine savage grown, can find
 No land to sack and pillage but their own.

By brutal Marius, and keen Sylla, first
 Effused the deluge dire of civil blood,
 Unceasing woes began, and this, or that,
 (Deep-drenching their revenge) nor virtue spared,
 Nor sex, nor age, nor quality, nor name ;
 Till Rome, into a human shambles turn'd,
 Made desarts lovely.—Oh, to well-earn'd chains
 Devoted race ?—If no true Roman then,
 No Scevola there was, to raise for me
 A vengeful hand : was there no father, robb'd
 Of blooming youth to prop his wither'd age ?
 No son, a witness to his hoary sire
 In dust and gore defiled ? No friend forlorn ?
 No wretch that doubtful trembled for himself ?
 None brave, or wild, to pierce a monster's heart,
 Who, heaping horror round, no more deserved
 The sacred shelter of the laws he spurn'd ?
 No. Sad o'er all profound dejection sat ;
 And nerveless fear. The slave's asylum theirs :
 Or flight, ill-judging, that the timid back
 Turns weak to slaughter ; or partaken guilt.
 In vain from Sylla's vanity I drew
 An unexampled deed. The power resign'd,
 And all unhop'd the common-wealth restored,

* Tib. Gracchus.

Amazed the public, and effaced his crimes.
Through streets yet streaming from his murderous hand

Unarm'd he stray'd, unguarded, unassail'd,
And on the bed of peace his ashes laid ;
A grace, which I to his demission gave.
But with him died not the despotic soul.
Ambition saw that stooping Rome could bear
A master, nor had virtue to be free.
Hence, for succeeding years, my troubled reign
No certain peace, no spreading prospect knew.
Destruction gather'd round. Still the black soul,
Or of a Catiline, or Rullus *, swell'd
With fell designs ; and all the watchful art
Of Cicero demanded, all the force,
All the state-wielding magic of his tongue ;
And all the thunder of my Cato's zeal.
With these I linger'd ; till the flame anew
Burst out in blaze immense, and wrapt the world.
The shameful contest sprung ; to whom mankind
Should yield the neck : to Pompey, who conceal'd
A rage impatient of an equal name ;
Or to the nobler Cæsar, on whose brow
O'er daring vice deluding virtue smiled,
And who no less a vain superior scorn'd.
Both bled, but bled in vain. New traitors rose.
The venal will be bought, the base have lords.
To these vile wars I left ambitious slaves ;
And from Philippi's field, from where in dust
The last of Romans, matchless Brutus ! lay,
Spread to the north untamed a rapid wing.

What though the first smooth Cæsar's arts caress'd
Merit, and virtue, simulating me ?
Severely tender ! cruelly humane !
The chain to clinch, and make it softer sit
On the new-broken still ferocious state ;
From the dark third †, succeeding, I beheld
The imperial monsters all.—A race on earth
Vindictive, sent the scourge of human-kind !
Whose blind profusion drain'd a bankrupt world ;
Whose lust to forming nature seems disgrace ;
And whose infernal rage bade every drop
Of ancient blood, that yet retain'd my flame,
To that of Pætus ‡, in the peaceful bath,
Or Rome's affrighted streets, inglorious flow.
But almost just the meanly-patient death,
That waits a tyrant's unprevented stroke.
Titus indeed gave one short evening gleam ;
More cordial felt, as in the midst it spread
Of storm, and horror. The delight of men !
He who the day, when his o'erflowing hand
Had made no happy heart, concluded lost ;
Trajan and he, with the mild sire and son, §
His son of virtue ! eased awhile mankind ;
And arts revived beneath their gentle beam.
Then was their last effort : what sculpture raised

* Pub. Servilius Rullus, tribune of the people, proposed an Agrarian law, in appearance very advantageous for the people, but destructive of their liberty ; and which was defeated by the eloquence of Cicero, in his speech against Rullus.

† Tiberius.

‡ Thrasea Pætus, put to death by Nero. Tacitus introduces the account he gives of his death thus :—" After having inhumanly slaughtered so many illustrious men, he (Nero) burned at last with a desire of cutting off virtue itself in the person of Thrasea," &c.

§ Antoninus Pius, and his adopted son Marcus Aurelius, afterwards called Antoninus Philosophus.

To Trajan's glory, following triumphs stole ;
And mix'd with Gothic forms (the chisel's shame)
On that triumphal arch *, the forms of Greece.

Meantime o'er rocky Thrace, and the deep vales
Of gelid Hæmus, I pursued my flight ;
And, piercing farthest Scythia, westward swept
Sarmatia †, traversed by a thousand streams :
A sullen land of lakes, and fens immense,
Of rocks, resounding torrents, gloomy heaths,
And cruel deserts black with sounding pine ;
Where nature frowns : though sometimes into smiles
She softens ; and immediate, at the touch
Of southern gales, throws from the sudden glebe
Luxuriant pasture, and a waste of flowers.
But, cold-comprest, when the whole loaded heaven
Descends in snow, lost in one white abrupt,
Lies undistinguish'd earth ; and, seized by frost,
Lakes, headlong streams, and floods, and oceans
sleep.

Yet there life glows ; the furry millions there
Deep-dig their dens beneath the sheltering snows :
And there a race of men prolific swarms,
To various pain, to little pleasure used ;
On whom, keen-parching, beat Rhipæan winds ;
Hard like their soil, and like their climate fierce,
The nursery of nations !—These I roused,
Drove land on land, on people people pour'd ;
Till from almost perpetual night they broke,
As if in search of day ; and o'er the banks
Of yielding empire, only slave-sustain'd,
Resistless raged, in vengeance urged by me.

Long in the barbarous heart the buried seeds
Of freedom lay, for many a wintry age ;
And though my spirit work'd, by slow degrees,
Nought but its pride and fierceness yet appear'd.
Then was the night of time, that parted worlds.
I quitted earth the while. As when the tribes
Aërial, warn'd of rising winter, ride
Autumnal winds, to warmer climates borne ;
So, arts and each good genius in my train,
I cut the closing gloom, and soar'd to heaven.

In the bright regions there of purest day,
Far other scenes, and palaces, arise,
Adorn'd profuse with other arts divine.
All beauty here below, to them compared,
Would, like a rose before the mid-day sun,
Shrink up its blossom ; like a bubble break
The passing poor magnificence of kings.
For there the King of Nature, in full blaze,
Calls every splendour forth ; and there his court
Amid æthereal powers, and virtues, holds :
Angel, archangel, tutelary gods
Of cities, nations, empires, and of worlds.
But sacred be the veil, that kindly clouds
A light too keen for mortals ; wraps a view
Too softening fair, for those that here in dust
Must cheerful toil out their appointed years.
A sense of higher life would only damp
The schoolboy's task, and spoil his playful hours.
Nor could the child of reason, feeble man,
With vigour through this infant being drudge ;
Did brighter worlds, their unimagined bliss
Disclosing, dazzle and dissolve his mind.

* Constantine's arch, to build which, that of Trajan was destroyed, sculpture having been then almost entirely lost.

† The ancient Sarmatia contained a vast tract of country running all along the north of Europe and Asia.

BRITAIN ;

BEING

THE FOURTH PART OF LIBERTY, A POEM.

CONTENTS.

DIFFERENCE betwixt the ancients and moderns slightly touched upon. Description of the dark ages. The Goddess of Liberty, who during these is supposed to have left earth, returns, attended with Arts and Science. She first descends on Italy. Sculpture, painting, and architecture fix at Rome, to revive their several arts by the great models of antiquity there, which many barbarous invasions had not been able to destroy. The revival of these arts marked out. That sometimes arts may flourish for a while under despotic governments, though never the natural and genuine production of them. Learning begins to dawn. The Muse and Science attend Liberty, who in her progress towards Great Britain raises several free states and cities. These enumerated. Author's exclamation of joy, upon seeing the British seas and coasts rise in the vision, which painted whatever the Goddess of Liberty said. She resumes her narration. The Genius of the Deep appears, and, addressing Liberty, associates Great Britain into his dominion. Liberty received and congratulated by Britannia, and the native genii or virtues of the island. These described. Animated by the presence of Liberty, they begin their operations. Their beneficent influence contrasted with the works and delusions of opposing demons. Concludes with an abstract of the English history, marking the several advances of Liberty, down to her complete establishment at the Revolution.

STRUCK with the rising scene, thus I, amazed—
 "Ah, goddess, what a change ! Is earth the same ?
 Of the same kind the ruthless race she feeds ?
 And does the same fair sun and ether spread
 Round this vile spot their all-enlivening soul ?
 Lo ! beauty fails ; lost in unlovely forms
 Of little pomp, magnificence no more
 Exalts the mind, and bids the public smile :
 While to rapacious interest glory leaves
 Mankind, and every grace of life is gone."

To this the Power, whose vital radiance calls
 From the brute mass of man an order'd world :

Wait till the morning shines, and from the depth
 Of Gothic darkness springs another day.
 True, genius droops ; the tender ancient taste
 Of beauty, then fresh-blooming in her prime,
 But faintly trembles through the callous soul ;
 And grandeur, or of morals, or of life,
 Sinks into safe pursuits, and creeping cares.
 Even cautious virtue seems to stoop her flight,
 And aged life to deem the generous deeds
 Of youth romantic. Yet in cooler thought
 Well reason'd, in researches piercing deep
 Through nature's works, in profitable arts,
 And all that calm experience can disclose,

(Slow guide, but sure) behold the world anew
 Exalted rise, with other honours crown'd ;
 And where my spirit wakes the finer powers,
 Athenian laurels still afresh shall bloom.

Oblivious ages pass'd ; while earth forsook
 By her best genii, lay to demons foul,
 And unchain'd furies, an abandon'd prey.
 Contention led the van ; first small of size,
 But soon dilating to the skies she towers :
 Then, wide as air, the livid fury spread,
 And high her head above the stormy clouds,
 She blazed in omens, swell'd the groaning winds
 With wild surmises, battlings, sounds of war :
 From land to land the maddening trumpet blew,
 And pour'd her venom through the heart of man.
 Shook to the pole, the north obey'd her call.
 Forth rush'd the bloody power of Gothic war,
 War against human-kind : rapine that led
 Millions of raging robbers in his train :
 Unlistening, barbarous force, to whom the sword
 Is reason, honour, law : the foe of arts
 By monsters follow'd, hideous to behold,
 That claim'd their place. Outrageous mix'd with
 Another species of tyrannic rule*, [these
 Unknown before, whose cankerous shackles seized
 The envenom'd soul ; a wilder fury, she
 Even o'er her elder sister† tyrannized ;
 Or, if perchance agreed, inflamed her rage.
 Dire was her train, and loud : the sable band,
 Thundering,—“Submit, ye laity ! Ye prophane !
 Earth is the Lord's, and therefore ours ; let kings
 Allow the common claim, and half be theirs ;
 If not, behold ! the sacred lightning flies :”
 Scholastic discord, with an hundred tongues,
 For science uttering jangling words obscure,
 Where frighted reason never yet could dwell :
 Of peremptory feature, cleric pride,
 Whose reddening cheek no contradiction bears ;
 And holy slander, his associate firm,
 On whom the lying spirit still descends :
 Mother of tortures ! persecuting zeal,
 High-flashing in her hand the ready torch,
 Or poniard bathed in unbelieving blood ;
 Hell's fiercest fiend ! of saintly brow demure,
 Assuming a celestial seraph's name,
 While she, beneath the blasphemous pretence
 Of pleasing Parent Heaven, the source of love !
 Has wrought more horrors more detested deeds,
 Than all the rest combined. Led on by her,

* Church power or ecclesiastical tyranny.

† Civil tyranny.

And wild of head to work her fell designs,
Came idiot superstition ; round with ears
Innumerable strow'd, ten thousand monkish forms
With legends plied them, and with tenets, meant
To charm or scare the simple into slaves,
And poison reason ; gross, she swallows all,
The most absurd believing ever most.
Broad o'er the whole her universal night,
The gloom still doubling, ignorance diffused.

Nought to be seen, but visionary monks
To councils strolling, and embroiling creeds ;
Banditti saints*, disturbing distant lands ;
And unknown nations, wandering for a home.
All lay reversed : the sacred arts of rule
Turn'd to flagitious leagues against mankind,
And arts of plunder more and more avow'd ;
Pure plain devotion to a solemn farce† ;
To holy dotage virtue, even to guile,
To murder, and a mockery of oaths ;
Brave ancient freedom to the rage of slaves‡,
Proud of their state, and fighting for their chains ;
Dishonour'd courage to the bravo's§ trade,
To civil broil ; and glory to romance.
Thus human life unhinged to ruin reel'd,
And giddy reason totter'd on her throne.

At last Heaven's best inexplicable scheme,
Disclosing, bade new brightening eras smile.
The high command gone forth, arts in my train,
And azure-mantled science, swift we spread
A sounding pinion. Eager pity, mixt
With indignation, urged her downward flight.
On Latium first we stoop'd, for doubtful life
That panted, sunk beneath unnumber'd woes.
Ah poor Italia ! what a bitter cup
Of vengeance hast thou drain'd ? Goths, Vandals,

Huns,
Lombards, barbarians broke from every land,
How many a ruffian form hast thou beheld ?
What horrid jargons heard, where rage alone
Was all thy frighted ear could comprehend ?
How frequent by the red inhuman hand,
Yet warm with brother's, husband's, father's blood,
Hast thou thy matrons and thy virgins seen
To violation dragg'd, and mingled death ?
What conflagrations, earthquakes, ravage, floods,
Have turn'd thy cities into stony wilds ;
And succourless, and bare, the poor remains
Of wretches forth to nature's common cast ?
Added to these, the still-continued waste
Of inbred foes¶, that on thy vitals prey,
And, double tyrants, seize the very soul.
Where hadst thou treasures for this rapine all ?
These hungry myriads, that thy bowels tore,
Heap'd sack on sack, and buried in their rage
Wonders of art ; whence this grey scene a mine
Of more than gold becomes and orient gems,
Where Egypt, Greece, and Rome united glow.

Here sculpture, painting, architecture, bent
From ancient models to restore their arts,
Remain'd. A little trace we how they rose.

Amid the hoary ruins sculpture first,
Deep-digging, from the cavern dark and damp,
Their grave for ages, bid her marble race
Spring to new light. Joy sparkled in her eyes,
And old remembrance thrill'd in every thought,
As she the pleasing resurrection saw.

* Crusades.

† The corruptions of the church of Rome.

‡ Vassalage, whence the attachment of clans to their chief.

§ Duelling.

¶ The Hierarchy.

In leaning site, respiring from his toils,
The well-known hero*, who deliver'd Greece,
His ample chest, all tempest with force,
Unconquerable rear'd. She saw the head,
Breathing the hero, small, of Grecian size,
Scarce more extensive than the sinewy neck ;
The spreading shoulders, muscular, and broad ;
The whole a mass of swelling sinews, touch'd
Into harmonious shape ; she saw, and joy'd.
The yellow hunter, Meleager, raised
His beauteous front, and through the finish'd whole
Shows what ideas smiled of old in Greece.
Of raging aspect, rush'd impetuous forth
The gladiator†. Pitiless his look,
And each keen sinew braced, the storm of war,
Ruffling, o'er all his nervous body frowns.
The dying other‡ from the gloom she drew.
Supported on his shorten'd arm he leans,
Prone agonising ; with incumbent fate,
Heavy declines his head ; yet dark beneath
The suffering feature sullen vengeance lows,
Shame, indignation, unaccomplish'd rage ;
And still the cheated eye expects his fall.
All conquest-flush'd, from prostrate Python, came
The quiver'd god§. In graceful act he stands,
His arm extended with the slacken'd bow.
Light flows his easy robe, and fair displays
A manly-soften'd form. The bloom of gods
Seems youthful o'er the beardless cheek to wave.
His features yet heroic ardour warms ;
And sweet subsiding to a native smile,
Mix'd with the joy elating conquest gives,
A scatter'd frown exalts his matchless air.
On Flora moved ; her full-proportion'd limbs
Rise through the mantle fluttering in the breeze.
The queen of love¶ arose, as from the deep
She sprung in all the melting pomp of charms.
Bashful she bends, her well-taught look aside
Turns in enchanting guise, where dubious mix
Vain conscious beauty, a dissembled sense
Of modest shame, and slippery looks of love.
The gazer grows enamour'd, and the stone,
As if exulting in its conquest, smiles.

So turn'd each limb, so swell'd with softening art,
That the deluded eye the marble doubts.
At last her utmost masterpiece she found,
That Maro** fired ; the miserable sire,
Wrapt with his sons in fate's severest grasp.
The serpents, twisting round, their stringent folds
Inextricable tie. Such passion here,
Such agonies, such bitterness of pain,
Seem so to tremble through the tortured stone,
That the touch'd heart engrosses all the view.
Almost unmark'd the best proportions pass,
That ever Greece beheld ; and, seen alone,
On the rapt eye the imperious passions seize :
The father's double pangs, both for himself
And sons convulsed ; to heaven his rueful look,
Imploping aid, and half-accusing, cast ;
His fell despair with indignation mix'd,
As the strong-curling monsters from his side
His full-extended fury cannot tear.
More tender touch'd, with varied art, his sons
All the soft rage of younger passions show :
In a boy's helpless fate one sinks oppress'd ;

* The Hercules of Farnese.

† The fighting gladiator. ‡ The dying gladiator.

§ The Apollo of Belvidere. ¶ The Venus of Medici.

¶ The group of Laocoon and his two sons, destroyed by two serpents. ** See Æneid, ii. ver. 199—227.

While, yet unpierced, the frightened other tries
His foot to steal out of the horrid twine.

She bore no more, but straight from Gothic rust
Her chisel clear'd, and dust* and fragments drove
Impetuous round. Successive as it went
From son to son, with more enlivening touch,
From the brute rock, it call'd the breathing form;
Till, in a legislator's awful grace
Dress'd, Buonaroti bid a Moses† rise,
And, looking love immense, a Saviour-God‡.

Of these observant, Painting felt the fire
Burn inward. Then ecstatic she diffused
The canvass, seized the pallet, with quick hand
The colours brew'd; and on the void expanse
Her gay creation pour'd, her mimic world.
Poor was the manner of her eldest race,
Barren, and dry; just struggling from the taste,
That had for ages scared in cloisters dim
The superstitious herd: yet glorious then
Were deem'd their works; where undevelop'd lay
The future wonders that enrich'd mankind,
And a new light and grace o'er Europe cast.
Arts gradual gather streams. Enlarging this
To each his portion of her various gifts
The goddess dealt, to none indulging all;
No, not to Raphael. At kind distance still
Perfection stands, like happiness, to tempt
The eternal chase. In elegant design
Improving nature; in ideas fair,
Or great, extracted from the fine antique;
In attitude, expression, airs divine;
Her sons of Rome and Florence bore the prize.
To those of Venice she the magic art
Of colours melting into colours gave.
Theirs too it was by one embracing mass
Of light and shade, that settles round the whole,
Or varies tremulous from part to part,
O'er all a binding harmony to throw,
To raise the picture, and repose the sight.
The Lombard school‡ succeeding, mingled both.

Meantime dread fanes and palaces, around,
Rear'd the magnificent front. Music again
Her universal language of the heart
Renew'd; and, rising from the plaintive vale,
To the full concert spread, and solemn quire.

Even bigots smiled; to their protection took
Arts not their own, and from them borrow'd pomp:
For in a tyrant's garden these a while
May bloom, though freedom be their parent soil.

And now confest, with gently-growing gleam,
The morning shone, and westward stream'd its
light.

The Muse awoke. Not sooner on the wing
Is the gay bird of dawn. Artless her voice,
Untaught and wild, yet warbling through the woods
Romantic lays. But as her northern course
She, with her tutor science, in my train,
Ardent pursued, her strains more noble grew:
While reason drew the plan, the heart inform'd
The moral page, and fancy lent it grace.

Rome and her circling deserts cast behind,
I pass'd not idle to my great sojourn.

On Arno's§ fertile plain, where the rich vine

* It is reported of Michael Angelo Buonaroti, the most celebrated master of modern sculpture, that he wrought with a kind of inspiration, or enthusiastical fury, which produced the effect here mentioned.

† Esteemed the two finest pieces of modern sculpture.

‡ The school of the Caracci.

§ The river Arno runs through Florence.

Luxuriant o'er Etrurian mountains roves,
Safe in the lap reposed of private bliss,
I small republics* raised. Thrice happy they!
Had social freedom bound their peace, and arts,
Instead of ruling power, ne'er meant for them,
Employ'd their little cares, and saved their fate.

Beyond the rugged Apennines, that roll
Far through Italian bounds their wavy tops,
My path too I with public blessings strow'd;
Free states and cities, where the Lombard plain,
In spite of culture negligent and gross,
From her deep bosom pours unbidden joys,
And green o'er all the land a garden spreads.

The barren rocks themselves beneath my foot,
Relenting bloom'd on the Ligurian shore.
Thick-swarming people† there like emmets, seized,
Amid surrounding cliffs, the scatter'd spots
Which nature left in her destroying rage‡,
Made their own fields, nor sigh'd for other lands.
There, in white prospect, from the rocky hill
Gradual descending to the shelter'd shore,
By me proud Genoa's marble turrets rose.
And while my genuine spirit warm'd her sons,
Beneath her Dorias, not unworthy, she
Vied for the trident of the narrow seas,
Ere Britain yet had open'd all the main.

Nor be the then triumphant state§ forgot;
Where¶, push'd from plunder'd earth, a remnant
still,

Inspired by me, through the dark ages kept
Of my old Roman flame some sparks alive:
The seeming god-built city! which my hand
Deep in the bosom fix'd of wondering seas.
Astonish'd mortals sail'd, with pleasing awe,
Around the sea-girt walls, by Neptune fenced,
And down the briny street; where on each hand,
Amazing seen amid unstable waves,
The splendid palace shines; and rising tides,
The green steps marking, murmur at the door.
To this fair queen of Adria's stormy gulf,
The mart of nations! long, obedient seas
Roll'd all the treasure of the radiant east.
But now no more. Than one great tyrant worse
(Whose shared oppression lightens, as diffused)
Each subject tearing, many tyrants rose;
The least the proudest. Join'd in dark cabal,
They jealous, watchful, silent, and severe,
Cast o'er the whole indissoluble chains:
The softer shackles of luxurious ease
They likewise added, to secure their sway.
Thus Venice fainter shines; and commerce thus,
Of toil impatient, flags the drooping sail.
Bursting, besides, his ancient bounds, he took
A larger circle||; found another seat**,

* The republics of Florence, Pisa, Lucca, and Sienna. They formerly have had very cruel wars together, but are now all peaceably subject to the great duke of Tuscany, except it be Lucca, which still maintains the form of a republic.

† The Genoese territory is reckoned very populous, but the towns and villages for the most part lie hid among the Apennine rocks and mountains.

‡ According to Dr. Burnet's system of the deluge.

§ Venice was the most flourishing city in Europe, with regard to trade, before the passage to the East Indies by the Cape of Good Hope, and America, were discovered.

¶ Those who fled to some marshes in the Adriatic gulf, from the desolation spread over Italy by an irruption of the Huns, first founded there this famous city, about the beginning of the fifth century.

|| The main ocean.

** Great Britain.

Opening a thousand ports, and, charm'd with toil,
Whom nothing can dismay, far other sons.

The mountains then, clad with eternal snow,
Confess'd my power. Deep as the rampant rocks,
By nature thrown insuperable round,
I planted there a league of friendly states*;
And bade plain freedom their ambition be.
There in the vale, where rural plenty fills,
From lakes, and meads, and furrow'd fields, her
horn,

Chief, where the Lemant† pure emits the Rhone,
Rare to be seen ! unguilty cities rise,
Cities of brothers form'd ; while equal life,
Accorded gracious with revolving power,
Maintains them free ; and, in their happy streets,
Nor cruel deed, nor misery, is known.
For valour, faith, and innocence of life,
Renown'd, a rough laborious people, there,
Not only give the dreadful Alps to smile,
And press their culture on retiring snows ;
But, to firm order train'd and patient war,
They likewise know, beyond the nerve remiss
Of mercenary force, how to defend
The tasteful little their hard toil has earn'd,
And the proud arm of Bourbon to defy.

Even, cheer'd by me, their shaggy mountains
More than or Gallie or Italian plains : [charm,
And sickening fancy oft, when absent long,
Pines to behold their Alpine views again‡ :
The hollow-winding stream : the vale, fair-spread
Amid an amphitheatre of hills ;
Whence, vapour-wing'd, the sudden tempest
springs :

From steep to steep ascending, the gay train
Of fogs, thick-roll'd into romantic shapes :
The flitting cloud, against the summit dash'd ;
And, by the sun illumined, pouring bright
A gemmy shower : hung o'er amazing rocks,
The mountain ash, and solemn-sounding pine :
The snow-fed torrent, in white mazes tost,
Down to the clear ethereal lake below :
And, high o'er-topping all the broken scene,
The mountain fading into sky ; where shines
On winter winter shivering, and whose top
Licks from their cloudy magazine the snows.

From these descending, as I waved my course
O'er vast Germania, the ferocious nurse
Of hardy men and hearts affronting death,
I gave some favour'd cities§ there to lift
A nobler brow, and through their swarming streets,
More busy, wealthy, cheerful, and alive,
In each contented face to look my soul.

Thence the loud Baltic passing, black with storm,
To wintry Scandinavia's utmost bound ;
There, I the manly race¶, the parent-hive
Of the mix'd kingdoms, form'd into a state
More regularly free. By keener air
Their genius purged, and temper'd hard by frost,
Tempest and toil their nerves, the sons of those
Whose only terror was a bloodless death||,

* The Swiss cantons.

† Geneva, situated on the Lacus Lemanus, a small state, but noble example of the blessings of civil and religious liberty.

‡ The Swiss, after having been long absent from their native country, are seized with such a violent desire of seeing it again, as affects them with a kind of languishing indisposition, called the Swiss sickness.

§ The Hans Towns.

¶ The Swedes.

|| See page 94, col. 2, note**.

They wise and dauntless, still sustain my cause.
Yet there I fix'd not. Turning to the south,
The whispering zephyrs sigh'd at my delay.

Here, with the shifted vision, burst my joy.
“ O the dear prospect ! O majestic view !
See Britain's empire ! Lo ! the watery vast
Wide-waves, diffusing the cerulean plain.
And now, methinks, like clouds at distance seen,
Emerging white from depths of ether, dawn
My kindred cliffs ; whence, wafted in the gale,
Ineffable, a secret sweetness breathes.
Goddess, forgive !—My heart, surprised, o'erflows
With filial fondness for the land you bless.”
As parents to a child complacent deign
Approvance, the celestial brightness smiled ;
Then thus—As o'er the wave-resounding deep,
To my near reign, the happy isle, I steer'd
With easy wing ; behold ! from surge to surge,
Stalk'd the tremendous Genius of the Deep.
Around him clouds, in mingled tempest, hung ;
Thick-flashing meteors crown'd his starry head ;
And ready thunder redden'd in his hand,
Or from it stream'd compressed the gloomy cloud.
Where'er he look'd, the trembling waves recoil'd.
He needs but strike the conscious flood, and shook
From shore to shore, in agitation dire,
It works his dreadful will. To me his voice
(Like that hoarse blast that round the cavern howls,
Mix'd with the murmurs of the falling main)
Address'd, began—“ By fate commission'd, go,
My sister-goddess now, to yon blest Isle,
Henceforth the partner of my rough domain.
All my dread walks to Britons open lie.
Those that refulgent, or with rosy morn,
Or yellow evening, flame ; those that, profuse
Drunk by equator-suns, severely shine ;
Or those that, to the poles approaching, rise
In billows rolling into Alps of ice.
Even, yet untouched by daring keel, be theirs
The vast Pacific ; that on other worlds,
Their future conquest, rolls resounding tides.
Long I maintain'd inviolate my reign ;
Nor Alexanders me, nor Cæsars braved.
Still, in the crook of shore, the coward sail
Till now low-crept ; and peddling commerce plied
Between near-joining lands. For Britons, chief,
It was reserved, with star-directed prow,
To dare the middle deep, and drive assured
To distant nations through the pathless main.
Chief, for their fearless hearts the glory waits,
Long months from land, while the black stormy night
Around them rages, on the groaning mast
With unshook knee to know their giddy way ;
To sing, unquell'd, amid the lashing wave ;
To laugh at danger. Theirs the triumph be,
By deep invention's keen pervading eye,
The heart of courage, and the hand of toil,
Each conquer'd ocean staining with their blood,
Instead of treasure robb'd by ruffian war,
Round social earth to circle fair exchange,
And bind the nations in a golden chain.
To these I honour'd stoop. Rushing to light
A race of men behold ! whose daring deeds
Will in renown exalt my nameless plains
O'er those of fabling earth, as hers to mine
In terror yield. Nay, could my savage heart
Such glories check, their unsubmitting soul
Would all my fury brave, my tempest climb,
And might in spite of me my kingdom force.”
Here, waiting no reply, the shadowy power

Eased the dark sky, and to the deeps return'd :
While the loud thunder rattling from his hand,
Auspicious, shook opponent Gallia's shore.

Of this encounter glad, my way to land
I quick pursued, that from the smiling sea
Received me joyous. Loud acclaims were heard,
And music, more than mortal, warbling, fill'd
With pleased astonishment the labouring hind,
Who for a while the unfinish'd furrow left,
And let the listening steer forget his toil.
Unseen by grosser eye, Britannia breathed,
And her aerial train, these sounds of joy ;
For of old time, since first the rushing flood,
Urged by Almighty Power, this favour'd isle
Turn'd flashing from the continent aside,
Indented shore to shore responsive still,
Its guardian she—the goddess, whose staid eye
Beams the dark azure of the doubtful dawn.
Her tresses, like a flood of soften'd light
Through clouds imbrown'd, in waving circles play.
Warm on her cheek sits beauty's brightest rose.
Of high demeanour, stately, shedding grace
With every motion. Full her rising chest ;
And new ideas, from her finish'd shape,
Charm'd sculpture taking might improve her art.
Such the fair guardian of an isle that boasts,
Profuse as vernal blooms, the fairest dames.
High-shining on the promontory's brow,
Awaiting me, she stood ; with hope inflamed,
By my mix'd spirit burning in her sons,
To firm, to polish, and exalt the state.

The native genii, round her, radiant smiled.
Courage, of soft deportment, aspect calm,
Unboastful, suffering long, and, till provoked,
As mild and harmless as the sporting child ;
But, on just reason, once his fury roused,
No lion springs more eager to his prey :
Blood is a pastime; and his heart, elate,
Knows no depressing fear. That virtue known
By the relenting look, whose equal heart
For others feels, as for another self :
Of various name, as various objects wake,
Warm into action, the kind sense within :
Whether the blameless poor, the nobly maim'd,
The lost to reason, the declined in life,
The helpless young that kiss no mother's hand,
And the grey second infancy of age,
She gives in public families to live,
A sight to gladden Heaven ! whether she stands
Fair beckoning at the hospitable gate,
And bids the stranger take repose and joy :
Whether, to solace honest labour, she
Rejoices those that make the land rejoice :
Or whether to philosophy, and arts,
(At once the basis and the finish'd pride
Of government and life) she spreads her hand ;
Nor knows her gift profuse, nor seems to know,
Doubling her bounty, that she gives at all.
Justice to these her awful presence join'd,
The mother of the state ! No low revenge,
No turbid passions in her breast ferment :
Tender, serene, compassionate of vice,
As the last woe that can afflict mankind,
She punishment awards ; yet of the good
More piteous still, and of the suffering whole,
Awards it firm. So fair her just decree,
That, in his judging peers, each on himself
Pronounces his own doom. O happy land !
Where reigns alone this justice of the free !
'Mid the bright group sincerity his front,

Diffusive, rear'd ; his pure untroubled eye
The fount of truth. The thoughtful power apart,
Now, pensive, cast on earth his fix'd regard,
Now, touch'd celestial, launch'd it on the sky.
The genius he whence Britain shines supreme,
The land of light, and rectitude of mind.
He too the fire of fancy feeds intense,
With all the train of passions thence derived :
Not kindling quick, a noisy transient blaze,
But gradual, silent, lasting, and profound.
Near him retirement, pointing to the shade,
And independence stood : the generous pair,
That simple life, the quiet-whispering grove,
And the still raptures of the free-born soul,
To cates prefer by virtue bought, not earn'd,
Proudly prefer them to the servile pomp,
And to the heart-embitter'd joys of slaves.
Or should the latter, to the public scene
Demanded, quit his sylvan friend awhile ;
Nought can his firmness shake, nothing seduce
His zeal, still active for the common-weal ;
Nor stormy tyrants, nor corruption's tools,
Foul ministers, dark-working by the force
Of secret-sapping gold. All their vile arts,
Their shameful honours, their perfidious gifts,
He greatly scorns ; and, if he must betray
His plunder'd country, or his power resign,
A moment's parley were eternal shame :
Illustrious into private life again,
From dirty levees he unstain'd ascends,
And firm in senates stands the patriot's ground,
Or draws new vigour in the peaceful shade.
Aloof the bashful virtue hover'd coy,
Proving by sweet distrust distrusted worth.
Rough labour closed the train : and in his hand
Rude, callous, sinew-swell'd, and black with toil,
Came manly indignation. Sour he seems,
And more than seems, by lawless pride assail'd ;
Yet kind at heart, and just, and generous, there
No vengeance lurks, no pale insidious gall :
Even in the very luxury of rage,
He softening can forgive a gallant foe ;
The nerve, support, and glory of the land !
Nor be religion, rational, and free,
Here pass'd in silence ; whose enraptured eye
Sees heaven with earth connected, human things
Link'd to divine : who not from servile fear,
By rites for some weak tyrant incense fit,
The God of Love adores, but from a heart
Effusing gladness, into pleasing awe
That now astonish'd swells, now in a calm
Of fearless confidence that smiles serene ;
That lives devotion, one continual hymn,
And then most grateful, when Heaven's bounty most
Is right enjoy'd. This ever-cheerful power
O'er the raised circle ray'd superior day.

I joy'd to join the virtues whence my reign
O'er Albion was to rise. Each cheering each,
And, like the circling planets from the sun,
All borrowing beams from me, a heighten'd zeal
Impatient fired us to commence our toils,
Or pleasures rather. Long the pungent time
Pass'd not in mutual hails ; but, through the land
Darting our light, we shone the fogs away.

The virtues conquer with a single look.
Such grace, such beauty, such victorious light,
Live in their presence, stream in every glance,
That the soul won, enamour'd, and refined,
Grows their own image, pure ethereal flame.
Hence the foul demons, that oppose our reign,

Would still from us deluded mortals wrap ;
 Or in gross shades they drown the visual ray,
 Or by the fogs of prejudice, where mix'd
 Falsehood and truth confounded, foil the sense
 With vain refracted images of bliss.
 But chief around the court of flatter'd kings
 They roll the dusky rampart, wall o'er wall
 Of darkness pile, and with their thickest shade
 Secure the throne. No savage Alp, the den
 Of wolves, and bears, the monstrous things obscene,
 That vex the swain, and waste the country round,
 Protected lies beneath a deeper cloud.
 Yet there we sometimes send a searching ray.
 As, at the sacred opening of the morn,
 The prowling race retire; so, pierced severe,
 Before our potent blaze these demons fly,
 And all their works dissolve.—The whisper'd tale,
 That, like the fabling Nile, no fountain knows ;
 Fair-faced deceit, whose wily conscious eye
 Ne'er looks direct ; the tongue that licks the dust,
 But, when it safely dares, as prompt to sting ;
 Smooth crocodile destruction, whose fell tears
 Ensnare ; the Janus face of courtly pride ;
 One to superiors heaves submissive eyes,
 On hapless worth the other scowls disdain ;
 Cheeks that for some weak tenderness alone,
 Some virtuous slip, can wear a blush ; the laugh
 Profane, when midnight bowls disclose the heart,
 At starving virtue, and at virtue's fools ;
 Determined to be broke, the plighted faith ;
 Nay more, the godless oath, that knows no ties ;
 Soft buzzing slander ; silky moths, that eat
 An honest name ; the harpy hand, and maw,
 Of avaricious luxury ; who makes
 The throne his shelter, venal laws his fort,
 And, by his service, who betrays his king.

Now turn your view, and mark from Celtic * night
 To present grandeur how my Britain rose.

Bold were those Britons, who, the careless sons
 Of nature, roam'd the forest-bounds, at once
 Their verdant city, high-embowering fane,
 And the gay circle of their woodland wars :
 For by the Druid † taught, that death but shifts
 The vital scene, they that prime fear despised ;
 And, prone to rush on steel, disdain'd to spare
 An ill-saved life that must again return.
 Erect from nature's hand, by tyrant force,
 And still more tyrant custom, unsubdued,
 Man knows no master save creating Heaven,
 Or such as choice and common good ordain.
 This general sense, with which the nations I
 Promiscuous fire, in Britons burn'd intense,
 Of future times prophetic. Witness, Rome
 Who saw'st thy Cæsar, from the naked land,
 Whose only fort was British hearts, repell'd,
 To seek Pharsalian wreaths. Witness, the toil,
 The blood of ages, bootless to secure,
 Beneath an empire's ‡ yoke, a stubborn isle,
 Disputed hard, and never quite subdued. [scorn'd
 The north ¶ remain'd untouched, where those who
 To stoop retired ; and, to their keen effort,
 Yielding at last, recoil'd the Roman power.
 In vain, unable to sustain the shock,

* Great Britain was peopled by the Celts or Gauls.

† The Druids, among the ancient Gauls and Britons, had the care and direction of all religious matters.

‡ The Roman empire.

¶ Caledonia, inhabited by the Scots and Picts ; whither a great many Britons, who would not submit to the Romans, retired.

From sea to sea desponding legions raised
 The wall * immense, and yet, on summer's eve,
 While sport his lambskins round, the shepherd's gaze.
 Continual o'er it burst the northern storm,
 As often, check'd, receded ; threatening hoarse
 A swift return. But the devouring flood
 No more endured control, when, to support
 The last remains of empire †, was recall'd
 The weary Roman, and the Briton lay
 Unnerv'd, exhausted, spiritless, and sunk.
 Great proof ! how men enfeeble into slaves.
 The sword behind him flash'd ; before him roar'd,
 Deaf to his woes, the deep ¶. Forlorn, around
 He roll'd his eye, not sparkling ardent flame,
 As when Caractacus ‡ to battle led
 Silurian swains, and Boadicea ¶ taught
 Her raging troops the miseries of slaves.

Then (sad relief !) from the bleak coast, that hears
 The German Ocean roar, deep-blooming, strong,
 And yellow-hair'd, the blue-eyed Saxon came.
 He came implored, but came with other aim
 Than to protect. For conquest and defence
 Suffices the same arm. With the fierce race
 Pour'd in a fresh invigorating stream,
 Blood, where unquell'd a mighty spirit glow'd.
 Rash war, and perilous battle, their delight ;
 And immature, and red with glorious wounds,
 Unpeaceful death their choice** : deriving thence
 A right to feast, and drain immortal bowls,
 In Odin's hall ; whose blazing roof resounds
 The genial uproar of those shades, who fall
 In desperate fight, or by some brave attempt ;
 And though more polish'd times the martial creed
 Disown, yet still the fearless habit lives.

* The wall of Severus, built upon Adrian's rampart, which ran for eighty miles quite across the country, from the mouth of the Tyne to Solway Frith.

† Irruptions of the Scots and Picts.

‡ The Roman empire being miserably torn by the northern nations, Britain was for ever abandoned by the Romans in the year 426 or 427.

¶ The Britons applying to Ætius the Roman general for assistance, thus expressed their miserable condition :—
 " We know not which way to turn us. The barbarians drive us to sea, and the sea forces us back to the barbarians ; between which we have only the choice of two deaths, either to be swallowed up by the waves, or butchered by the sword."

§ King of the Silures, famous for his great exploits, and accounted the best general Great Britain had ever produced. The Silures were esteemed the bravest and most powerful of all the Britons: they inhabited Herefordshire, Radnorshire, Brecknockshire, Monmouthshire, and Glamorganshire.

¶ Queen of the Iceni: her story is well known.

** It is certain, that an opinion was fixed and general among them (the Goths), that death was but the entrance into another life; that all men who lived lazy and unactive lives, and died natural deaths, by sickness or by age, went into vast caves under ground, all dark and miry, full of noisome creatures usual to such places, and there for ever grovelled in endless stench and misery. On the contrary, all who gave themselves to warlike actions and enterprises, to the conquest of their neighbours and the slaughter of their enemies, and died in battle, or of violent deaths upon bold adventures or resolutions, went immediately to the vast hall or palace of Odin, their god of war, who eternally kept open house for all such guests, where they were entertained at infinite tables, in perpetual feasts and mirth, carousing in bowls made of the skulls of their enemies they had slain: according to the number of whom, every one in these mansions of pleasure was the most honoured and best entertained.

SIR WILLIAM TEMPLE'S *Essay on Heroic Virtue*.

Nor were the surly gifts of war their all.
 Wisdom was likewise theirs, indulgent laws,
 The calm gradations of art-nursing peace,
 And matchless orders, the deep basis still
 On which ascends my British reign. Untamed
 To the refining subtleties of slaves,
 They brought an happy government along !
 Form'd by that freedom, which, with secret voice,
 Impartial nature teaches all her sons,
 And which of old through the whole Scythian mass
 I strong inspired. Monarchical their state,
 But prudently confined, and mingled wise
 Of each harmonious power : only, too much,
 Imperious war into their rule infused,
 Prevail'd their general-king, and chieftain-thanes.

In many a field, by civil fury stain'd,
 Bled the discordant Heptarchy* ; and long
 (Educing good from ill) the battle groan'd :
 Ere, blood-cemented, Anglo-Saxons saw
 Egbert † and peace on one united throne.

No sooner dawn'd the fair-disclosing calm
 Of brighter days, when lo ! the north anew,
 With stormy nations black, on England pour'd
 Woes the severest e'er a people felt.
 The Danish Raven ‡, lured by annual prey,
 Hung o'er the land incessant. Fleet on fleet
 Of barbarous pirates unremitting tore
 The miserable coast. Before them stalk'd,
 Far seen, the demon of devouring flame ;
 Rapine, and murder, all with blood besmear'd,
 Without or ear, or eye, or feeling heart ;
 While close behind them march'd the fallow power
 Of desolating famine, who delights
 In grass-grown cities, and in desert fields ;
 And purple-spotted pestilence, by whom
 Even friendship scared, in sickening horror sinks
 Each social sense and tenderness of life.
 Fixing at last, the sanguinary race
 Spread, from the Humber's loud-resounding shore,
 To where the Thames devolves his gentle maze,
 And with superior arm the Saxon awed,
 But superstition first, and monkish dreams,
 And monk-directed cloister-seeking kings,
 Had ate away his vigour, ate away
 His edge of courage, and depress'd the soul
 Of conquering freedom, which he once respired.
 Thus cruel ages pass'd ; and rare appear'd
 White-mantled peace, exulting o'er the vale,
 As when, with Alfred §, from the wilds she came
 To policed cities and protected plains.
 Thus by degrees the Saxon empire sunk,
 Then set entire in Hastings' || bloody field.

Compendious war ! (on Britain's glory bent
 So fate ordain'd) in that decisive day,

The haughty Norman seized at once an isle,
 For which, through many a century, in vain,
 The Roman, Saxon, Dane, had toil'd and bled.
 Of Gothic nations this the final burst ;
 And, mix'd the genius of these people all,
 Their virtues mix'd in one exalted stream,
 Here the rich tide of English blood grew full.

Awhile my spirit slept ; the land a while,
 Affrighted, droop'd beneath despotic rage.
 Instead of Edward's equal gentle laws*,
 The furious victor's partial will prevail'd.
 All prostrate lay ; and, in the secret shade,
 Deep-stung but fearful indignation gnash'd
 His teeth. Of freedom, property, despoil'd,
 And of their bulwark, arms ; with castles crush'd,
 With ruffians quarter'd o'er the bridled land ;
 The shivering wretches at the curfew † sound,
 Dejected shrunk into their sordid beds,
 And, through the mournful gloom, of ancient times
 Mused sad, or dreamt of better. Even to feed
 A tyrant's idle sport the peasant starved :
 To the wild herd, the pasture of the tame,
 The cheerful hamlet, spiry town, was given,
 And the brown forest ‡ roughen'd wide around.

But this so dead, so vile submission, long
 Endured not. Gathering force, my gradual flame
 Shook off the mountain of tyrannic sway.
 Unused to bend, impatient of control,
 Tyrants themselves the common tyrant check'd.
 The church, by kings intractable and fierce,
 Denied her portion of the plunder'd state,
 Or tempted, by the timorous and weak,
 To gain new ground, first taught their rapine law.
 The Barons next a nobler league began,
 Both those of English and of Norman race
 In one fraternal nation blended now,
 The nation of the free ! press'd by a band
 Of patriots §, ardent as the summer's noon
 That looks delighted on, the tyrant see !
 Mark ! how with feign'd alacrity he bears
 His strong reluctance down, his dark revenge,
 And gives the Charter, by which life indeed
 Becomes of price, a glory to be man. [affirm'd,

Through this and through succeeding reigns
 These long-contested rights, the wholesome winds
 Of opposition || hence began to blow,
 And often since have lent the country life.
 Before their breath corruption's insect-blights,
 The darkening clouds of evil counsel, fly ;
 Or should they sounding swell, a putrid court,
 A pestilential ministry, they purge,
 And ventilated states renew their bloom.

Though with the temper'd monarchy here mix'd
 Aristocratic sway, the people still,

* The seven kingdoms of the Anglo-Saxons, considered as being united into one common government, under a general in chief or monarch, and by the means of an assembly-general, or Wittenagemot.

† Egbert king of Wessex, who, after having reduced all the other kingdoms of the Heptarchy under his dominion, was the first king of England.

‡ A famous Danish standard was called Reafan, or Raven. The Danes imagined that, before a battle, the Raven wrought upon this standard clapt its wings or hung down its head, in token of victory or defeat.

§ Alfred the Great, renowned in war, and no less famous in peace for his many excellent institutions, particularly that of juries.

|| The battle of Hastings, in which Harold II. the last of the Saxon kings, was slain, and William the Conqueror made himself master of England.

* Edward III. the Confessor, who reduced the West-Saxon, Mercian, and Danish laws into one body ; which from that time became common to all England, under the name of the Laws of Edward.

† The curfew bell (from the French *couvre-feu*), which was rung every night at eight of the clock, to warn the English to put out their fires and candles, under the penalty of a severe fine.

‡ The New Forest in Hampshire ; to make which, the country for above thirty miles in compass was laid waste.

§ On the 5th of June 1215, king John, met by the barons on Runnemede, signed the great charter of liberties, or Magna Charta.

|| The league formed by the barons, during the reign of John, in the year 1213, was the first confederacy made in England, in defence of the nation's interest, against the king.

Flatter'd by this or that, as interest lean'd,
 No full protection knew. For me reserved,
 And for my commons, was that glorious turn.
 They crown'd my first attempt, in senates * rose
 The fort of freedom! Slow till then, alone,
 Had work'd that general liberty, that soul
 Which generous nature breathes, and which, when
 By me to bondage was corrupted Rome, [left
 I through the northern nations wide diffused.
 Hence many a people, fierce with freedom, rush'd
 From the rude iron regions of the north,
 To Libyan deserts swarm protruding swarm;
 And pour'd new spirit through a slavish world.
 Yet, o'er these Gothic states, the king and chiefs
 Retain'd the high prerogative of war,
 And with enormous property engross'd
 The mingled power. But on Britannia's shore
 Now present, I to raise my reign began
 By raising the democracy, the third
 And broadest bulwark of the guarded state.
 Then was the full, the perfect plan disclosed
 Of Britain's matchless constitution, mix'd
 Of mutual checking and supporting powers,
 King, Lords, and Commons; nor the name of free
 Deserving, while the vassal-many droop'd:
 For since the moment of the whole they form,
 So, as depress'd or raised, the balance they
 Of public welfare and of glory cast.
 Mark, from this period, the continual proof.

When kings of narrow genius, minion-rid,
 Neglecting faithful worth for fawning slaves;
 Proudly regardless of their people's complaints,
 And poorly passive of insulting foes;
 Double, not prudent; obstinate, not firm;
 Their mercy, fear; necessity their faith;
 Instead of generous fire, presumptuous, hot;
 Rash to resolve, and slothful to perform;
 Tyrants at once, and slaves; imperious, mean;
 To want rapacious joining shameful waste;
 By counsels weak and wicked, easy roused
 To paltry schemes of absolute command;
 To seek their splendour in their sure disgrace;
 And in a broken ruin'd people, wealth:
 When such o'ercast the state, no bond of love,
 No heart, no soul, no unity, no nerve,
 Combined the loose disjointed public, lost
 To fame abroad, to happiness at home.

But when an Edward † and an Henry ‡ breathed
 Through the charm'd whole one all-exerting soul:
 Drawn sympathetic from his dark retreat,
 When wide-attracted merit round them glow'd:
 When counsels just, extensive, generous, firm,
 Amid the maze of state, determined kept
 Some ruling point in view: when, on the stock
 Of public good and glory grafted, spread
 Their palms, their laurels; or, if thence they stray'd,
 Swift to return, and patient of restraint:
 When regal state, pre-eminence of place,
 They scorn'd to deem pre-eminence of ease,

* The commons are generally thought to have been first represented in parliament towards the end of Henry the Third's reign. To a parliament called in the year 1264, each county was ordered to send four knights, as representatives of their respective shires; and to a parliament called in the year following, each county was ordered to send, as their representatives, two knights; and each city and borough, as many citizens and burgesses. Till then, history makes no mention of them; whence a very strong argument may be drawn, to fix the original of the house of commons to that era.

† Edward III.

‡ Henry V.

To be luxurious drones, that only rob
 The busy hive: as in distinction, power,
 Indulgence, honour, and advantage, first;
 When they too claim'd in virtue, danger, toil,
 Superior rank; with equal hand, prepared
 To guard the subject, and to quell the foe:
 When such with me their vital influence shed,
 No mutter'd grievance, hopeless sigh, was heard;
 No foul distrust through wary senates ran,
 Confined their bounty, and their ardour quench'd:
 On aid, unquestion'd, liberal aid was given:
 Safe in their conduct, by their valour fired,
 Fond where they led, victorious armies rush'd;
 And Cressy, Poitiers, Agincourt * proclaim
 What kings supported by almighty love,
 And people fired with liberty, can do.

Be veil'd the savage reigns †, when kindred rage
 The numerous-once Plantagenets devour'd,
 A race to vengeance vow'd! and when, oppress'd
 By private feuds, almost extinguish'd lay
 My quivering flame. But, in the next, behold!
 A cautious tyrant ‡ lend it oil anew.

Proud, dark, suspicious, brooding o'er his gold,
 As how to fix his throne he jealous cast
 His crafty views around; pierced with a ray,
 Which on his timid mind I darted full,
 He mark'd the barons of excessive sway,
 At pleasure making and unmaking kings §;
 And hence, to crush these petty tyrants, plann'd
 A law ¶, that let them, by the silent waste
 Of luxury, their landed wealth diffuse,
 And with that wealth their implicated power.
 By soft degrees a mighty change ensued,
 Even working to this day. With streams, deduced
 From these diminish'd floods, the country smiled:
 As when impetuous from the snow-heap'd Alps,
 To vernal suns relenting, pours the Rhine;
 While undivided, oft, with wasteful sweep,
 He foams along; but, through Batavian meads,
 Branch'd into fair canals, indulgent flows;
 Waters a thousand fields; and culture, trade,
 Towns, meadows, gliding ships, and villas mix'd,
 A rich, a wondrous landscape, rises round.

His furious son || the soul-enslaving chain * *
 Which many a doating venerable age
 Had link by link strong-twisted round the land,
 Shook off. No longer could be borne a power,
 From Heaven pretended, to deceive, to void
 Each solemn tie, to plunder without bounds,
 To curb the generous soul, to fool mankind;
 And, wild at last, to plunge into a sea
 Of blood and horror. The returning light, [gloom,
 That first through Wickliff †† streak'd the priestly
 Now burst in open day. Bared to the blaze,
 Forth from the haunts of superstition ‡‡ crawl'd
 Her motley sons, fantastic figures all;

* Three famous battles, gained by the English over the French.

† During the civil wars betwixt the families of York and Lancaster.

‡ Henry VII.

§ The famous earl of Warwick, during the reigns of Henry VI. and Edward IV., was called the king-maker.

¶ Permitting the barons to alienate their lands.

|| Henry VIII.

** Of papal dominion.

†† John Wickliff, doctor of divinity, who towards the close of the fourteenth century published doctrines very contrary to those of the church of Rome, and particularly denying the papal authority. His followers grew very numerous, and were called Lollards.

‡‡ Suppression of monasteries.

And, wide-dispersed, their useless fetid wealth
In graceful labour bloom'd, and fruits of peace.

Trade, join'd to these, on every sea display'd
A daring canvass, pour'd with every tide
A golden flood. From other worlds * were roll'd
The guilty glittering stores, whose fatal charms,
By the plain Indian happily despised,
Yet work'd his woe ; and to the blissful groves,
Where nature lived herself among her sons,
And innocence and joy for ever dwelt,
Drew rage unknown to Pagan climes before,
The worst, the zeal-inflamed barbarian drew.
Be no such horrid commerce, Britain, thine !
But want for want, with mutual aid, supply.

The commons thus enrich'd, and powerful grown,
Against the barons weigh'd. Eliza then,
Amid these doubtful motions steady, gave
The beam to fix. She ! like the Secret Eye
That never closes on a guarded world,
So sought, so mark'd, so seized the public good,
That self-supported, without one ally,
She awed her inward, quell'd her circling, foes.
Inspired by me, beneath her sheltering arm,
In spite of raging universal sway †,
And raging seas repress'd, the Belgic states,
My bulwark on the continent, arose.
Matchless in all the spirit of her days !
With confidence unbounded, fearless love
Elate, her fervent people waited gay,
Cheerful demanded the long-threaten'd fleet ‡,
And dash'd the pride of Spain around their isle.
Nor ceased the British thunder here to rage :
The deep, reclaim'd, obey'd its awful call ;
In fire and smoke Iberian ports involved,
The trembling foe, even to the centre shook
Of their new-conquer'd world, and skulking stole,
By veering winds, their Indian treasure home.
Meantime, peace, plenty, justice, science, arts,
With softer laurels crown'd her happy reign.

As yet uncircumscribed the regal power,
And wild and vague prerogative remain'd
A wide voracious gulf, where swallow'd oft
The helpless subject lay. This to reduce
To the just limit was my great effort.

By means, that evil seem to narrow man,
Superior beings work their mystic will :
From storm and trouble thus a settled calm,
At last, effulgent o'er Britannia smiled.

The gathering tempest, heaven-commission'd,
Came,
Came in the Princeſs, who, drunk with flattery,
His vain pacific counsels ruled the world ; [dreamt
Though scorn'd abroad, bewilder'd in a maze
Of fruitless treaties ; while at home enslaved,
And by a worthless crew insatiate drain'd,
He lost his people's confidence and love :
Irreparable loss ! whence crowns become
An anxious burden. Years inglorious pass'd :
Triumphant Spain the vengeful draught enjoy'd :
Abandon'd Frederick || pined, and Raleigh bled.

* The Spanish West Indies.

† The dominion of the house of Austria.

‡ The Spanish Armada. Rapin says, that after proper measures had been taken, the enemy was expected with uncommon alacrity. § James I.

|| Elector Palatine, and who had been chosen king of Bohemia, but was strip'd of all his dominions and dignities by the Emperor Ferdinand, while James the First, his father-in-law, being amused from time to time, endeavoured to mediate a peace.

But nothing that to these internal broils,
That rancour, he began ; while lawless sway,
He, with his slavish doctors, tried to rear
On metaphysic, on enchanted ground *,
And all the mazy quibbles of the schools :
As if for one, and sometimes for the worst,
Heaven had mankind in vengeance only made.
Vain the pretence ! not so the dire effect,
The fierce, the foolish discord † thence derived,
That tears the country still, by party-rage
And ministerial clamour kept alive.

In action weak, and for the wordy war
Best fitted, faint this prince pursued his claim :
Content to teach the subject-herd, how great,
How sacred he ! how despicable they !

But his unyielding son ‡ those doctrines drank,
With all a bigot's rage (who never damps
By reasoning his fire ;) and what they taught,
Warm and tenacious, into practice push'd.
Senates, in vain, their kind restraint applied :
The more they struggled to support the laws,
His justice-dreading ministers the more
Drove him beyond their bounds. Tired with the
check

Of faithful love, and with the flattery pleased
Of false designing guilt, the fountain § he
Of public wisdom and of justice shut.
Wide mourn'd the land. Straight to the voted aid,
Free, cordial, large, of never failing source,
The illegal imposition follow'd harsh,
With execration given, or ruthless squeezed
From an insulted people, by a band
Of the worst ruffians, those of tyrant power.
Oppression walk'd at large, and pour'd abroad
Her unrelenting train : informers, spies,
Blood-hounds, that sturdy freedom to the grove
Pursue ; projectors of aggravating schemes,
Commerce || to load for unprotected seas,
To sell the starving many to the few, ¶
And drain a thousand ways the exhausted land.
Even from that place, whence healing peace should
And gospel truth, inhuman bigots shed [flow,
Their poison ** round ; and on the venal bench,
Instead of justice, party held the scale,
And violence the sword. Afflicted years,
Too patient, felt at last their vengeance full.

'Mid the low murmurs of submissive fear
And mingled rage, my Hamden raised his voice,
And to the laws appeal'd ; the laws no more
In judgment sat, behoved some other ear :
When instant from the keen resentive north,
By long oppression, by religion roused,
The guardian army came. Beneath its wing
Was call'd, though meant to furnish hostile aid,
The more than Roman senate. There a flame
Broke out, that clear'd, consumed, renew'd the land.
In deep emotion hurl'd, nor Greece, nor Rome,
Indignant bursting from a tyrant's chain,
While, full of me, each agitated soul
Strung every nerve and flamed in every eye,
Had e'er beheld such light and heat combined !
Such heads and hearts ! such dreadful zeal, led on

* The monstrous, and till then unheard-of, doctrines of divine indefeasible hereditary right, passive obedience, &c.

† The parties of Whig and Tory. ‡ Charles I.

§ Parliaments. || Ship-money. ¶ Monopolies.

** The raging high-church sermons of these times, inspiring at once a spirit of slavish submission to the court, and of bitter persecution against those whom they call church and state puritans.

By calm majestic wisdom ! taught its course
What nuisance to devour ; such wisdom fired
With unabating zeal, and aim'd sincere
To clear the weedy state, restore the laws,
And for the future to secure their sway.

This then the purpose of my mildest sons.
But man is blind. A nation once inflamed
(Chief, should the breath of factious fury blow,
With the wild rage of mad enthusiast swell'd)
Not easy cools again. From breast to breast,
From eye to eye, the kindling passions mix
In heighten'd blaze ; and, ever wise and just,
High Heaven to gracious ends directs the storm.
Thus in one conflagration Britain wrapt,
And by confusion's lawless sons despoil'd,
King, Lords, and Commons, thundering to the ground,
Successive rush'd.—Lo ! from their ashes rose,
Gay-beaming radiant youth, the Phoenix state*.

The grievous yoke of vassalage, the yoke
Of private life, lay by those flames dissolved :
And, from the wasteful, the luxurious king†,
Was purchased‡ that which taught the young to
bend.

Stronger restored, the commons tax'd the whole,
And built on that eternal rock their power.
The crown, of its hereditary wealth
Despoil'd, on senates more dependant grew,
And they more frequent, more assured. Yet lived,
And in full vigour spread that bitter root,
The passive doctrines, by their patrons first
Opposed ferocious, when they touch themselves.

This wild delusive cant ; the rash cabal
Of hungry courtiers, ravenous for prey ;
The bigot, restless in a double chain
To bind anew the land ; the constant need
Of finding faithless means, of shifting forms,
And flattering senates, to supply his waste ;
These tore some moments from the careless prince,
And in his breast awaked the kindred plan.
By dangerous softness long he mined his way ;
By subtle arts, dissimulation deep ;
By sharing what corruption shower'd, profuse ;
By breathing wide the gay licentious plague,
And pleasing manners, fitted to deceive.

At last subsided the delirious joy,
On whose high billow, from the saintly reign,
The nation drove too far. A pension'd king,
Against his country bribed by Gallic gold,
The port§ pernicious sold, the Scylla since
And fell Charybdis of the British seas ;
Freedom attack'd abroad||, with surer blow
To cut it off at home ; the saviour-league¶
Of Europe broke ; the progress even advanced
Of universal war**, which to reduce
Such seas of blood and treasure Britain cost ;
The millions, by a generous people given,
Or squander'd vile, or to corrupt disgrace,
And awe the land with force†† not their own,
Employ'd ; the darling Church herself betray'd ;
All these, broad glaring, oped the general eye,
And waked my spirit, the resisting soul.

Mild was, at first, and half ashamed, the check
Of senates, shook from the fantastic dream

* At the Restoration.

† Charles II.

‡ Court of Wards.

§ Dunkirk.

|| The war, in conjunction with France, against the Dutch.

¶ The triple alliance.

** Under Lewis XIV.

†† A standing army, raised without the consent of parliament.

Of absolute submission, tenets vile !

Which slaves would blush to own, and which, reduced
To practice, always honest nature shook.

Not even the mask removed, and the fierce front
Of tyranny disclosed ; nor trampled laws ;
Nor seized each badge of freedom* through the land ;
Nor Sidney bleeding for the unpublish'd page ;
Nor on the bench avow'd corruption placed,
And murderous rage itself, in Jefferies' form :
Nor endless acts of arbitrary power,
Cruel, and false, could raise the public arm.
Distrustful, scatter'd, of combining chiefs
Devoid, and dreading blind rapacious war,
The patient public turns not, till impell'd
To the near verge of ruin. Hence I roused
The bigot king†, and hurried fated on
His measures immature. But chafed his zeal,
Out-flaming Rome herself, portentous scared
The troubled nation : Mary's horrid days
To fancy bleeding rose, and the dire glare
Of Smithfield lighten'd in its eyes anew.

Yet silence reign'd. Each on another scowl'd
Rueful amazement, pressing down his rage :
As, mustering vengeance, the deep thunder frowns,
Awfully still, waiting the high command
To spring. Straight from his country Europe saved,
To save Britannia, lo ! my darling son,
Than hero more ! the patriot of mankind !
Immortal Nassau came. I hush'd the deep
By demons roused, and bade the listed warriors‡,
Still shifting as behoved, with various breath,
Waft the deliverer to the longing shore.
See ! wide alive, the foaming channel§ bright
With swelling sails, and all the pride of war ;
Delightful view ! when justice draws the sword :
And mark ! diffusing ardent soul around
And sweet contempt of death, my streaming flag||,
Even adverse navies¶ bless'd the binding gale,
Kept down the glad acclaim, and silent joy'd.
Arrived, the pomp, and not the waste of arms,
His progress mark'd. The faint opposing host**
For once, in yielding, their best victory found,
And by desertion proved exalted faith ;
While his the bloodless conquest of the heart,
Shouts without groan, and triumph without war.

Then dawn'd the period destined to confine
The surge of wild prerogative, to raise
A mound restraining its imperious rage,
And bid the raving deep no farther flow.
Nor were, without that fence, the swallow'd state

* The charters of corporations.

† James II.

‡ The Prince of Orange, in his passage to England, though his fleet had been at first dispersed by a storm, was afterwards extremely favoured by several changes of wind.

§ Rapin in his History of England :—The third of November the fleet entered the Channel, and lay by between Calais and Dover, to stay for the ships that were behind. Here the Prince called a council of war. It is easy to imagine what a glorious show the fleet made. Five or six hundred ships in so narrow a channel, and both the English and French shores covered with numberless spectators, are no common sight. For my part, who was then on board the fleet, I own it struck me extremely.

|| The Prince placed himself in the main body, carrying a flag with English colours, and their Highnesses' arms surrounded with this motto,—“The Protestant Religion and the Liberties of England ;” and underneath the motto of the house of Nassau, “Jo maintiendrai, I will maintain.” Rapin.

¶ The English fleet.

** The King's army.

Better than Belgian plains without their dykes,
Sustaining weighty seas. This, often saved
By more than human hand, the public saw,
And seized the white-wing'd moment. Pleased to
Destructive power*, a wise heroic prince† [yield
Even lent his aid—Thrice happy did they know
Their happiness, Britannia's bounded kings !
What though not theirs the boast, in dungeon glooms
To plunge bold freedom ; or, to cheerless wilds,
To drive him from the cordial face of friend ;
Or fierce to strike him at the midnight hour,
By mandate blind, not justice, that delights
To dare the keenest eye of open day.
What though no glory to control the laws,
And make injurious will their only rule,
They deem it ! What though, tools of wanton power,
Pestiferous armies swarm not at their call !
What though they give not a relentless crew
Of civil furies, proud oppression's fangs,
To tear at pleasure the dejected land,
With starving labour pampering idle waste !
To clothe the naked, feed the hungry, wipe
The guiltless tear from lone affliction's eye ;
To raise hid merit, set the alluring light
Of virtue high to view ; to nourish arts,
Direct the thunder of an injured state,

Make a whole glorious people sing for joy,
Blesshuman kind, and through the downward depth
Of future times, to spread that better sun
Which lights up British soul : for deeds like these
The dazzling fair career unbounded lies ;
While (still superior bliss !) the dark abrupt
Is kindly barr'd, the precipice of ill.
O luxury divine ! O poor to this,
Ye giddy glories of despotic thrones !
By this, by this indeed, is imaged Heaven,
By boundless good, without the power of ill.
And now behold ! exalted as the cope
That swells immense o'er many-peopled earth,
And like it, free, my fabric stands complete,
The palace of the laws. To the four heavens
Four gates impartial thrown, unceasing crowds,
With kings themselves the hearty peasant mix'd,
Pour urgent in. And though to different ranks
Responsive place belongs, yet equal spreads
The sheltering roof o'er all ; while plenty flows,
And glad contentment echoes round the whole.
Ye floods descend ! Ye winds, confirming, blow !
Nor outward tempest, nor corrosive time,
Nought but the felon undermining hand
Of dark corruption, can its frame dissolve,
And lay the toil of ages in the dust.

THE PROSPECT ;

BEING

THE FIFTH PART OF LIBERTY, A POEM.

CONTENTS.

Author addresses the Goddess of Liberty, marking the happiness and grandeur of Great Britain, as arising from her influence. She resumes her discourse, and points out the chief virtues which are necessary to maintain her establishment there. Recommends, as its last ornament and finishing, sciences, fine arts, and public works. The encouragement of these urged from the example of France, though under a despotic government. The whole concludes with a prospect of future times, given by the Goddess of Liberty: this described by the author, as it passes in vision before him.

HERE interposing, as the goddess paused ; —
“ Oh, blest Britannia ! in thy presence blest,
Thou guardian of mankind ! whence spring, alone,
All human grandeur, happiness, and fame :
For toil, by thee protected, feels no pain ;
The poor's man's lot with milk and honey flows ;
And, gilded with thy rays, even death looks gay.
Let other lands the potent blessings boast
Of more exalting suns. Let Asia's woods,
Untended, yield the vegetable fleece :
And let the little insect-artist fume,
On higher life intent, its silken tomb.
Let wandering rocks, in radiant birth, disclose
The various-tinctured children of the sun.
From the prone beam let more delicious fruits
A flavour drink, that in one piercing taste

Bids each combine. Let Gallic vineyards burst
With floods of joy ; with mild balsamic juice
The Tuscan olive. Let Arabia breathe
Her spicy gales, her vital gums distil.
Turbid with gold, let southern rivers flow ;
And orient floods draw soft, o'er pearls, their maze.
Let Afric vaunt her treasures ; let Peru
Deep in her bowels her own ruin breed,
The yellow traitor that her bliss betray'd—
Unequal'd bliss !—and to unequal'd rage !
Yet nor the gorgeous east, nor golden south,
Nor, in full prime, that new-discover'd world,
Where flames the falling day, in wealth and praise
Shall with Britannia vie, while, goddess, she
Derives her praise from thee, her matchless charms.
Her hearty fruits the hand of freedom own ;
And, warm with culture, her thick-clustering fields
Prolific teem. Eternal verdure crowns
Her meads ; her gardens smile eternal spring.
She gives the hunter-horse, unquell'd by toil,
Ardent to rush into the rapid chase :
She, whitening o'er her downs, diffusive pours
Unnumber'd flocks ; she weaves the fleecy robe
That wraps the nations : she, to lusty droves,
The richest pasture spreads ; and, hers, deep-wave
Autumnal seas of pleasing plenty round.
These her delights ; and by no baneful herb,
No darting tiger, no grim lion's glare,
No fierce-descending wolf, no serpent roll'd
In spires immense progressive o'er the land,

* By the Bill of Rights, and the Act of Succession.

† William III.

Disturb'd. Enlivening these, add cities, full
Of wealth, of trade, of cheerful-toiling crowds :
Add thriving towns ; add villages and farms,
Innumerable sow'd along the lively vale,
Where bold unrival'd peasants happy dwell ;
Add ancient seats, with venerable oaks
Embosom'd high, while kindred floods below
Wind through the mead ; and those of modern hand,
More pompous, add, that splendid shine afar.
Need I her limpid lakes, her rivers name,
Where swarm the finny race ? Thee, chief, O
Thames !

On whose each tide, glad with returning sails,
Flows in the mingled harvest of mankind ?
And thee, thou Severn, whose prodigious swell,
And waves resounding, imitate the main ?
Why need I name her deep capacious ports,
That point around the world ? And why her seas ?
All ocean is her own, and every land
To whom her ruling thunder ocean bears.
She too the mineral feeds : the obedient lead,
The warlike iron, nor the peaceful less,
Forming of life, art-civilised, the bond ;
And that the Tyrian merchant sought of old*,
Not dreaming then of Britain's brighter fame.
She rears to freedom an undaunted race :
Compatriot, zealous, hospitable, kind,
Hers the warm Cambrian : hers the lofty Scot,
To hardship tamed, active in arts and arms,
Fired with a restless, an impatient flame,
That leads him raptur'd where ambition calls :
And English merit hers ; where meet, combined,
Whate'er high fancy, sound judicious thought,
An ample generous heart, undrooping soul,
And firm tenacious valour, can bestow.
Great nurse of fruits, of flocks, of commerce, she !
Great nurse of men ! By thee, O goddess, taught,
Her old renown I trace ; disclose her source
Of wealth, of grandeur, and to Britons sing
A strain the Muses never touch'd before.

But how shall this thy mighty kingdom stand ?
On what unyielding base ? how finish'd shine ?"

At this her eye, collecting all its fire,
Beam'd more than human ; and her awful voice,
Majestic, thus she raised :—"To Britons bear
This closing strain, and with intenser note
Loud let it sound in their awaken'd ear."

On virtue can alone my kingdom stand,
On public virtue, every virtue join'd :
For, lost this social cement of mankind,
The greatest empires, by scarce-felt degrees,
Will moulder soft away ; till, tottering loose,
They prone at last to total ruin rush.
Unblest by virtue, government a league
Becomes, a circling junto of the great,
To rob by law ; religion mild, a yoke
To tame the stooping soul, a trick of state
To mask their rapine, and to share the prey.
What are without it senates, save a face
Of consultation deep, and reason free ;
While the determined voice and heart are sold ?
What boasted freedom, save a sounding name ?
And what election, but a market vile
Of slaves self-barter'd ? Virtue ! without thee,
There is no ruling eye, no nerve, in states ;
War has no vigour, and no safety peace :
Even justice warps to party ; laws oppress ;
Wide through the land their weak protection fails,
First broke the balance, and then scorn'd the sword.

* Tin.

Thus nations sink, society dissolves ;
Rapine, and guile, and violence, break loose,
Everting life, and turning love to gall ;
Man hates the face of man, and Indian woods,
And Libya's hissing sands, to him are tame.

By those three virtues be the frame sustain'd
Of British freedom :—independent life ;
Integrity in office ; and, o'er all
Supreme, a passion for the common-weal. [gift

Hail ! independence, hail ! Heaven's next best
To that of life and an immortal soul !

The life of life ! that to the banquet high
And sober meal gives taste ; to the bow'd roof
Fair-dream'd repose, and to the cottage charms.
Of public freedom, hail, thou secret source !
Whose streams, from every quarter confluent, form
My better Nile, that nurses human life.
By rills from thee deduced, irriguous, fed,
The private field looks gay, with nature's wealth
Abundant flows, and blooms with each delight
That nature craves. Its happy master there,
The only freeman, walks his pleasing round ;
Sweet-featured peace attending ; fearless truth ;
Firm resolution ; goodness, blessing all
That can rejoice ; contentment, surest friend ;
And still fresh stores from nature's book derived,
Philosophy, companion ever new.

These cheer his rural, and sustain or fire,
When into action call'd, his busy hours.
Meantime, true-judging moderate desires,
Economy and taste combined, direct
His clear affairs, and from debauching fiends
Secure his little kingdom. Nor can those
Whom fortune heaps, without these virtues, reach
That truce with pain, that animated ease,
That self-enjoyment springing from within ;
That independence, active, or retired,
Which make the soundest bliss of man below ;
But, lost beneath the rubbish of their means,
And drain'd by wants to nature all unknown,
A wandering, tasteless, gaily-wretched train,
Though rich, are beggars ; and though noble, slaves.

Lo ! damn'd to wealth, at what a gross expense,
They purchase disappointment, pain, and shame.
Instead of hearty hospitable cheer,
See ! how the hall with brutal riot flows ;
While in the foaming flood, fermenting, steep'd,
The country maddens into party rage.
Mark ! those disgraceful piles of wood and stone ;
Those parks and gardens, where, his haunts
betrimm'd,

And nature by presumptuous art oppress'd,
The woodland genius mourns. See ! the full board
That steams disgust, and bowls that give no joy :
No truth invited there to feed the mind,
Nor wit, the wine-rejoicing reason quaffs.
Hark ! how the dome with insolence resounds,
With those retain'd by vanity to scare
Repose and friends. To tyrant fashion, mark !
The costly worship paid, to the broad gaze
Of fools. From still delusive day to day,
Led an eternal round of lying hope,
See ! self-abandon'd, how they roam adrift,
Dash'd o'er the town, a miserable wreck !
Then to adore some warbling enuch turn'd,
With Midas' ears they crowd ; or to the buzz
Of masquerade unblushing ; or, to show
Their scorn of nature, at the tragic scene
They mirthful sit, or prove the comic true :
But, chief, behold ! around the rattling board

The civil robbers ranged ; and even the fair,
 The tender fair, each sweetness laid aside,
 As fierce for plunder as all-licensed troops
 In some sack'd city. Thus dissolved their wealth,
 Without one generous luxury dissolved,
 Or quarter'd on it many a needless want,
 At the throng'd levee bends the venal tribe :
 With fair, but faithless smiles, each varnish'd o'er,
 Each smooth as those that mutually deceive,
 And for their falsehood each despising each :
 Till shook their patron by the wintry winds,
 Wide flies the wither'd shower, and leaves him bare.
 O far superior Afric's sable sons,
 By merchant pilfer'd, to these willing slaves !
 And, rich, as unsqueezed favourite, to them,
 Is he who can his virtue boast alone !

Britons ! be firm !—nor let corruption sly
 Twine round your heart indissoluble chains !
 The steel of Brutus burst the grosser bonds
 By Caesar cast o'er Rome ; but still remain'd
 The soft enchanting fetters of the mind,
 And other Cæsars rose. Determined, hold
 Your independence ; for, that once destroy'd,
 Unfounded, freedom is a morning dream,
 That flits aerial from the spreading eye.

Forbid it, Heaven ! that ever I need urge
 Integrity in office on my sons !
 Inculcate common honour—not to rob —
 And whom ?—the gracious, the confiding hand,
 That lavishly rewards ; the toiling poor,
 Whose cup with many a bitter drop is mixt ;
 The guardian public ; every face they see,
 And every friend ; nay, in effect, themselves.
 As in familiar life, the villain's fate
 Admits no cure ; so, when a desperate age
 At this arrives, I the devoted race
 Indignant spurn, and, hopeless, soar away.

But, ah too little known to modern times !
 Be not the noblest passion past unsung ;
 That ray peculiar, from unbounded love
 Effused, which kindles the heroic soul ;
 Devotion to the public. Glorious flame !
 Celestial ardour ! in what unknown worlds,
 Profusely scatter'd through the blue immense,
 Hast thou been blessing myriads, since in Rome,
 Old virtuous Rome, so many deathless names
 From thee their lustre drew ? since, taught by thee,
 Their poverty put splendour to the blush,
 Pain grew luxurious, and even death delight ?
 O wilt thou ne'er, in thy long period, look,
 With blaze direct, on this my last retreat ?

'Tis not enough, from self right understood
 Reflected, that thy rays inflame the heart :
 Though virtue not disdains appeals to self,
 Dreads not the trial ; all her joys are true,
 Nor is there any real joy save hers.
 Far less the tepid, the declaiming race,
 Foes to corruption, to its wages friends,
 Or those whom private passions, for a while,
 Beneath my standard list, can they suffice
 To raise and fix the glory of my reign ?

An active flood of universal love
 Must swell the breast. First, in effusion wide,
 The restless spirit roves creation round,
 And seizes every being : stronger then
 It tends to life, whate'er the kindred search
 Of bliss allies : then, more collected still,
 It urges human-kind : a passion grown,
 At last, the central parent-public calls
 Its utmost effort forth, awakes each sense,

The comely, grand, and tender. Without this,
 This awful pant, shook from sublimer powers
 Than those of self, this heaven-infused delight,
 This moral gravitation, rushing prone
 To press the public good, my system soon,
 Traverse, to several selfish centres drawn,
 Will reel to ruin : while for ever shut
 Stand the bright portals of desponding fame.

From sordid self shoot up no shining deeds,
 None of those ancient lights that gladden earth,
 Give grace to being, and arouse the brave
 To just ambition, virtue's quickening fire !
 Life tedious grows, an idly-bustling round,
 Fill'd up with actions animal and mean ;
 A dull gazette ! The impatient reader scorns
 The poor historic page ; till kindly comes
 Oblivion, and redeems a people's shame.
 Not so the times when, emulation-stung,
 Greece shone in genius, science, and in arts ;
 And Rome in virtues dreadful to be told !
 To live was glory then ! and charm'd mankind :
 Through the deep periods of devolving time,
 Those, raptured, copy ; these, astonish'd, read.

True, a corrupted state, with every vice
 And every meanness foul, this passion damps.
 Who can, unshock'd, behold the cruel eye ?
 The pale inveigling smile ? The ruffian front ?
 The wretch abandon'd to relentless self,
 Equally vile if miser or profuse ?
 Powers not of God, assiduous to corrupt ?
 The fell deputed tyrant, who devours
 The poor and weak, at distance from redress ? *
 Delirious faction bellowing loud my name ?
 The false fair-seeming patriot's hollow boast ?
 A race resolved on bondage, fierce for chains,
 My sacred rights a merchandise alone
 Esteeming, and to work their feeder's will
 By deeds, a horror to mankind, prepared,
 As were the dregs of Romulus of old ?
 Who these indeed can undetesting see ?—
 But who un pitying ? To the generous eye
 Distress is virtue ; and, though self-betray'd,
 A people struggling with their fate must rouse
 The hero's throb. Nor can a land, at once,
 Be lost to virtue quite. How glorious then !
 Fit luxury for gods ! to save the good,
 Protect the feeble, dash bold vice aside,
 Depress the wicked, and restore the frail.
 Posterity, besides, the young are pure,
 And sons maytinge their fathers' cheek with shame.

Should then the times arrive (which Heaven
 avert !)

That Britons bend unnerved, not by the force
 Of arms, more generous and more manly, quell'd,
 But by corruption's soul-dejecting arts,
 Arts impudent ! and gross ! by their own gold,
 In part bestow'd, to bribe them to give all ;
 With party raging, or immersed in sloth,
 Should they Britannia's well-fought laurels yield
 To slyly-conquering Gaul ; even from her brow
 Let her own naval oak be basely torn
 By such as tremble at the stiffening gale,
 And nerveless sink, while others sing rejoiced.
 Or (darker prospect ! scarce one gleam behind
 Disclosing) should the broad corruptive plague

* Lord Molesworth, in his account of Denmark, says,—
 It is observed, that in limited monarchies and common-
 wealths a neighbourhood to the seat of the government is
 advantageous to the subjects ; whilst the distant provinces
 are less thriving, and more liable to oppression.

Breathe from the city to the farthest hut
 That sits serene within the forest-shade,
 The fever'd people fire, inflame their wants,
 And their luxurious thirst, so gathering rage,
 That, were a buyer found, they stand prepared
 To sell their birthright for a cooling draught :
 Should shameless pens for plain corruption plead ;
 The hired assassins of the common-weal !
 Deem'd the declaiming rant of Greece and Rome,
 Should public virtue grow the public scoff,
 Till private, failing, staggers through the land ;
 Till round the city loose mechanic want,
 Dire-prowling nightly, makes the cheerful haunts
 Of men more hideous than Numidian wilds ;
 Nor from its fury sleeps the vale in peace ;
 And murders, horrors, perjuries abound :
 Nay, till to lowest deeds the highest stoop ;
 The rich, like starving wretches, thirst for gold ;
 And those, on whom the vernal showers of Heaven
 All-bounteous fall, and that prime lot bestow,
 A power to live to nature and themselves,
 In sick attendance wear their anxious days,
 With fortune, joyless, and with honours, mean :
 Meantime, perhaps, profusion flows around,
 The waste of war, without the works of peace ;
 No mark of millions in the gulf absorb
 Of uncreating vice, none but the rage
 Of roused corruption still demanding more :
 That very portion, which (by faithful skill
 Employ'd) might make the smiling public rear
 Her ornamented head, drill'd through the hands
 Of mercenary tools, serves but to nurse
 A locust-band within, and in the bud
 Leaves starved each work of dignity and use.

I paint the worst. But should these times arrive,
 If any nobler passion yet remain,
 Let all my sons all parties fling aside,
 Despise their nonsense, and together join ;
 Let worth and virtue, scorning low despair,
 Exerted full, from every quarter shine [light,
 Commix'd in heighten'd blaze. Light flash'd to
 Moral or intellectual, more intense
 By giving glows. As on pure winter's eve,
 Gradual, the stars effulge ; fainter, at first,
 They, straggling, rise ; but when the radiant host,
 In thick profusion pour'd, shine out immense,
 Each casting vivid influence on each,
 From pole to pole a glittering deluge plays,
 And worlds above rejoice, and men below.

But why to Britons this superfluous strain ? —
 Good-nature, honest truth even somewhat blunt,
 Of crooked baseness an indignant scorn,
 A zeal unyielding in their country's cause,
 And ready bounty, wont to dwell with them —
 Nor only wont — Wide o'er the land diffused,
 In many a blest retirement still they dwell.

To softer prospect turn we now the view,
 To laurel'd science, arts, and public works,
 That lend my finish'd fabric comely pride,
 Grandeur and grace. Of sullen genius he !
 Cursed by the Muses ! by the Graces loathed !
 Who deems beneath the public's high regard
 These last enlivening touches of my reign.
 However puff'd with power, and gorged with wealth,
 A nation be ; let trade enormous rise,
 Let east and south their mingled treasures pour,
 Till, swell'd, impetuous the corrupting flood
 Burst o'er the city and devour the land :
 Yet these neglected, these recording arts,
 Wealth rots a nuisance ; and, oblivious sunk,

That nation must another Carthage lie ;
 If not by them, on monumental brass,
 On sculptured marble, on the deathless page,
 Imprest, renown had left no trace behind :
 In vain, to future times, the sage had thought,
 The legislator plann'd, the hero found
 A beauteous death, the patriot toil'd in vain.
 The awarers they of fame's immortal wreath,
 They rouse ambition, they the mind exalt,
 Give great ideas, lovely forms infuse,
 Delight the general eye, and, drest by them,
 The moral Venus glows with double charms.

Science, my close associate, still attends
 Where'er I go. Sometimes, in simple guise,
 She walks the furrow with the consul swain,
 Whispering unletter'd wisdom to the heart
 Direct ; or, sometimes, in the pompous robe
 Of Fancy drest, she charms Athenian wits,
 And a whole sapient city round her burns.
 Then o'er her brow Minerva's terrors nod :
 With Xenophon, sometimes, in dire extremes,
 She breathes deliberate soul, and makes retreat*
 Unequal'd glory : with the Theban sage,
 Epaminondas, first and best of men !
 Sometimes she bids the deep-embattled host,
 Above the vulgar reach resistless form'd,
 March to sure conquest — never gain'd before † !
 Nor on the treacherous seas of giddy state
 Unskilful she : when the triumphant tide
 Of high-swollen empire wears one boundless smile,
 And the gale tempts to new pursuits of fame,
 Sometimes, with Scipio, she collects her sail,
 And seeks the blissful shore of rural ease,
 Where, but the Aonian maids, no sirens sing ;
 Or should the deep-brew'd tempest muttering rise,
 While rocks and shoals perfidious lurk around,
 With Tully she her wide-reviving light
 To senates holds, a Catiline confounds,
 And saves a while from Cæsar sinking Rome.
 Such the kind power, whose piercing eye dissolves
 Each mental fetter, and sets reason free ;
 For me inspiring an enlighten'd zeal,
 The more tenacious as the more convinced,
 How happy freemen, and how wretched slaves.
 To Britons not unknown, to Britons full
 The Goddess spreads her stores, the secret soul
 That quickens trade, the breath unseen that wafts
 To them the treasures of a balanced world.
 But finer arts (save what the Muse has sung
 In daring flight, above all modern wing)
 Neglected droop the head ; and public works,
 Broke by corruption into private gain,
 Not ornament, disgrace ; not serve, destroy.

Shall Britons, by their own joint wisdom ruled
 Beneath one royal head, whose vital power
 Connects, enlivens, and exerts the whole ;
 In finer arts, and public works, shall they
 To Gallia yield ? yield to a land that bends,
 Deprest, and broke, beneath the will of one ?
 Of one who, should the unkingly thirst of gold,
 Or tyrant passions, or ambition, prompt,
 Calls locust-armies o'er the blasted land :

* The famous retreat of the Ten Thousand was chiefly conducted by Xenophon.

† Epaminondas, after having beat the Lacedæmonians and their allies in the battle of Leuctra, made an incursion, at the head of a powerful army, into Laconia. It was now six hundred years since the Dorians had possessed this country, and in all that time the face of an enemy had not been seen within their territories. PLUTARCH in AGESILAUS.

Drains from its thirsty bounds the springs of wealth,
His own insatiate reservoir to fill ;
To the lone desert patriot-merit frowns,
Or into dungeons, arts ; when they, their chains
Indignant bursting, for their nobler works
All other licence scorn but truth's and mine.
Oh shame to think ! shall Britons, in the field
Unconquer'd still, the better laurel lose ?
Even in that monarch's * reign, who vainly dreamt,
By giddy power betray'd, and flatter'd pride,
To grasp unbounded sway ; while, swarming round,
His armies dared all Europe to the field ;
To hostile hands while treasure flow'd profuse,
And, that great source of treasure, subjects' blood,
Inhuman squander'd, sicken'd every land ;
From Britain, chief, while my superior sons,
In vengeance rushing, dash'd his idle hopes,
And bade his agonizing heart be low :
Even then, as in the golden calm of peace,
What public works at home, what arts arose !
What various science shone ! what genius glow'd !

'Tis not for me to paint, diffusive shot
O'er fair extents of land, the shining road ;
The flood-compelling arch ; the long canal†,
Through mountains piercing, and uniting seas ;
The dome ‡ resounding sweet with infant joy,
From famine saved, or cruel-handed shame ;
And that where valour counts his noble scars ‡ ;
The land where social pleasure loves to dwell,
Of the fierce demon, gothic duel, freed ;
The robber from his farthest forest chased ;
The turbid city clear'd, and, by degrees,
Into sure peace the best police refined,
Magnificence, and grace, and decent joy.
Let Gallic bards record, how honour'd arts
And science, by despotic bounty bless'd,
At distance flourish'd from my parent-eye,
Restoring ancient taste ; how Boileau rose ;
How the big Roman soul shook, in Corneille,
The trembling stage : in elegant Racine,
How the more powerful though more humble voice
Of nature-painting Greece, resistless breathed
The whole-awaken'd heart : how Molière's scene,
Chastised and regular, with well-judged wit,
Not scatter'd wild, and native humour, graced,
Was life itself. To public honours raised,
How learning in warm seminaries § spread ;
And, more for glory than the small reward,
How emulation strove. How their pure tongue
Almost obtain'd what was denied their arms.
From Rome, awhile, how painting, courted long,
With Poussin came ; ancient design, that lifts
A fairer front, and looks another soul.
How the kind art, || that of unvalued price
The famed and only picture easy gives,
Refined her touch, and, through the shadow'd piece,
All the live spirit of the painter pour'd.
Coyest of arts, how sculpture northward deign'd
A look, and bade her Girardon arise.
How lavish grandeur blazed ; the barren waste,
Astonish'd, saw the sudden palace swell,
And fountains spout amid its arid shades.
For leagues bright vistas opening to the view,
How forests in majestic gardens smiled.
How menial Arts, by their gay sisters taught,
Wove the deep flower, the blooming foliage train'd

In joyous figures o'er the silky lawn,
The palace cheer'd, illumed the storied wall,
And with the pencil vied the glowing loom. *

These laurels, Louis, by the droppings raised
Of thy profusion, its dishonour shade,
And, green through future times, shall bind thy
While the vain honours of perfidious war [brow ;
Wither abhor'd, or in oblivion lost :
With what prevailing vigour had they shot,
And stole a deeper root, by the full tide
Of war-sunk millions fed ? Superior still,
How had they branch'd luxuriant to the skies,
In Britain planted, by the potent juice
Of freedom swell'd ? Forced is the bloom of arts,
A false uncertain spring, when bounty gives,
Weak without me, a transitory gleam.
Fair shine the slippery days, enticing skies
Of favour smile, and courtly breezes blow ;
Till arts, betray'd, trust to the flattering air
Their tender blossom : then malignant rise
The blights of envy, of those insect-clouds,
That, blasting merit, often cover courts :
Nay, should, perchance, some kind Mæcenas aid
The doubtful beamings of his prince's soul,
His wavering ardour fix, and unconfined
Diffuse his warm beneficence around ;
Yet death, at last, and wintry tyrants come,
Each sprig of genius killing at the root.
But when with me imperial bounty joins,
Wide o'er the public blows eternal spring ;
While mingled autumn every harvest pours
Of every land ; whate'er invention, art,
Creating toil, and nature, can produce.

Here ceased the goddess ; and her ardent wings,
Dipt in the colours of the heavenly bow,
Stood waving radiance round, for sudden flight
Prepared ; when thus, impatient, burst my prayer :
" O forming light of life ! O better sun !
Sun of mankind ! by whom the cloudy north
Sublimed, not envies Languedocian skies,
That, unustain'd ether all, diffusive smile :
When shall we call these ancient laurels ours ?
And when thy work complete ?"—Straight with her
Celestial red, she touch'd my darken'd eyes. [hand,
As at the touch of day the shades dissolve,
So quick, methought, the misty circle clear'd,
That dims the dawn of being here below :
The future shone disclosed, and, in long view,
Bright-rising eras instant rush'd to light.

" They come ! great goddess ! I the times behold !
The times our fathers, in the bloody field,
Have earn'd so dear ; and, not with less renown,
In the warm struggles of the senate fight.
The times I see ! whose glory to supply,
For toiling ages, commerce round the world
Has wing'd unnumber'd sails, and from each land
Materials heap'd, that, well-employ'd, with Rome
Might vie our grandeur, and with Greece our art.

Lo ! princes I behold ! contriving still,
And still conducting firm some brave design ;
Kings ! that the narrow joyless circle scorn,
Burst the blockade of false designing men,
Of treacherous smiles, of adulation fell,
And of the blinding clouds around them thrown :
Their court rejoicing millions ; worth alone,
And virtue, dear to them ; their best delight,
In just proportion, to give general joy ;
Their jealous care thy kingdom to maintain ;
The public glory theirs ; unsparing loves

* The tapestry of the Gobelins.

* Lewis XIV. † The canal of Languedoc.

‡ The hospitals for foundlings and invalids

§ The Academies of Sciences, of the Belles Lettres, and of Painting.

|| Engraving.

Their endless treasure ; and their deeds their praise.
 With thee they work. Nought can resist your force :
 Life feels it quickening in her dark retreats :
 Strong spread the blooms of genius, science, art ;
 His bashful bounds disclosing merit breaks ;
 And, big with fruits of glory, virtue blows
 Expansive o'er the land. Another race
 Of generous youth, of patriot-sires, I see !
 Not those vain insects fluttering in the blaze
 Of court, and ball, and play ; those venal souls,
 Corruption's veteran unrelenting bands,
 That, to their vices slaves, can ne'er be free.

I see the fountains purged, whence life derives
 A clear or turbid flow ; see the young mind
 Not fed impure by chance, by flattery fool'd,
 Or by scholastic jargon bloated proud,
 But fill'd and nourish'd by the light of truth ;
 Then, beam'd through fancy the refining ray,
 And pouring on the heart, the passions feel
 At once informing light and moving flame ;
 Till, moral, public, graceful action crowns
 The whole. Behold ! the fair contention glows,
 In all that mind or body can adorn,
 And form to life. Instead of barren heads,
 Barbarian pedants, wrangling sons of pride,
 And truth-perplexing metaphysic wits ;
 Men, patriots, chiefs, and citizens, are form'd.

Lo ! justice, like the liberal light of heaven,
 Unpurchased, shines on all ; and from her beam,
 Appalling guilt, retire the savage crew
 That prowl amid the darkness they themselves
 Have thrown around the laws. Oppression grieves ;
 See ! how her legal furies bite the lip,
 While Yorkes and Talbots their deep snares detect,
 And seizes swift justice through the clouds they raise.

See ! social labour lifts his guarded head,
 And men not yield to government in vain.
 From the sure land is rooted ruffian force,
 And the lewd nurse of villains, idle waste ; [bowl,
 Lo ! razed their haunts, down dash'd their maddening
 A nation's poison ! Beauteous order reigns :
 Manly submission, unimposing toil,
 Trade without guile, civility that marks
 From the foul herd of brutal slaves thy sons,
 And fearless peace. Or should affronting war
 To slow but dreadful vengeance rouse the just,
 Unfailing fields of freemen I behold !
 That know, with their own proper arm to guard
 Their own blest isle against a leaguuing world.
 Despairing Gaul her boiling youth restrains,
 Dissolved her dream of universal sway :
 The winds and seas are Britain's wide domain ;
 And not a sail, but by permission, spreads.

Lo ! swarming southward on rejoicing suns,
 Gay colonies extend ; the calm retreat
 Of undeserved distress ; the better home
 Of those whom bigots chase from foreign lands.
 Not built on rapine, servitude, and woe,
 And in their turn some petty tyrant's prey ;
 But, bound by social freedom, firm they rise ;
 Such as, of late, an Oglethorpe has form'd,
 And, crowding round, the charm'd Savannah sees.

Horrid with want and misery, no more
 Our streets the tender passenger afflict :
 Nor shivering age, nor sickness without friend,
 Or home, or bed to bear his burning load ;
 Nor agonizing infant, that ne'er e'eru'd
 Its guiltless pangs, I see ! The stores, profuse,
 Which British bounty has to these assign'd,
 No more the sacrilegious riot swell

Of cannibal devourers ! Right applied,
 No starving wretch the land of Freedom stains :
 If poor, employment finds ; if old, demands,
 If sick, if maim'd, his miserable due ;
 And will, if young, repay the fondest care.
 Sweet sets the sun of stormy life, and sweet
 The morning shines, in mercy's dews array'd.
 Lo ! how they rise ! these families of Heaven !
 That, chief, (but why—ye bigots !—why so late ?)
 Where blooms and warbles glad a rising age * :
 What smiles of praise ! And, while their song ascends,
 The listening seraph lays his lute aside.

Hark ! the gay Muses raise a nobler strain
 With active nature, warm impassion'd truth,
 Engaging fable, lucid order, notes
 Of various string, and heart-felt image fill'd.
 Behold ! I see the dread delightful school
 Of temper'd passions, and of polish'd life,
 Restored : behold ! the well-dissembled scene
 Calls from embellish'd eyes the lovely tear,
 Or lights up mirth in modest cheeks again.
 Lo ! vanish'd monster-land.—Lo ! driven away
 Those that Apollo's sacred walks profane :
 Their wild creation scatter'd, where a world
 Unknown to nature, Chaos more confused,
 O'er the brute scene its ouran-outangst pours ;
 Detested forms ! that, on the mind imprint,
 Corrupt, confound, and barbarise an age.

Behold ! all thine again the sister-arts,
 Thy graces they, knit in harmonious dance.
 Nursed by the treasure from a nation drain'd
 Their works to purchase, they to nobler rouse
 Their untamed genius, their unfetter'd thought ;
 Of pompous tyrants, and of dreaming monks,
 The gaudy tools, and prisoners, no more.
 Lo ! numerous domes a Burlington confess :
 For kings and senates fit, the palace see !
 The temple breathing a religious awe ;
 Even framed with elegance the plain retreat,
 The private dwelling. Certain in his aim,
 Taste, never idly working, saves expense.

See ! sylvan scenes, where art, alone, pretends
 To dress her mistress, and disclose her charms :
 Such as a Pope in miniature has shown ;
 A Bathurst o'er the widening forest † spreads ;
 And such as form a Richmond, Chiswick, Stowe.

August, around, what public works I see !
 Lo ! stately streets, lo ! squares that court the breeze,
 In spite of those to whom pertains the care,
 Engulfing more than founded Roman ways,
 Lo ! ray'd from cities o'er the brighten'd land,
 Connecting sea to sea, the solid road.
 Lo ! the proud arch (no vile exactor's stand)
 With easy sweep bestrides the chasing flood.
 See ! long canals, and deepen'd rivers join
 Each part with each, and with the circling main
 The whole enliven'd isle. Lo ! ports expand,
 Free as the winds and waves, their sheltering arms.
 Lo ! streaming comfort o'er the troubled deep,
 On every pointed coast the light-house towers :
 And, by the broad imperious mole repell'd,
 Hark ! how the baffled storm indignant roars."

As thick to view these varied wonders rose,
 Shook all my soul with transport, unassured,
 The vision broke ; and, on my waking eye,
 Rush'd the still ruins of dejected Rome.

* An hospital for foundlings.

† A creature which, of all brutes, most resembles man.
 —See Dr. Tyson's treatise on this animal.

‡ Okely woods, near Cirencester.

SOPHONISBA ;

A Tragedy.

TO THE QUEEN.

MADAM,

The notice your Majesty has condescended to take of the following Tragedy, emboldens me to lay it, in the humblest manner, at your Majesty's feet. And to whom can this illustrious Carthaginian so properly fly for protection, as to a Queen who commands the hearts of a people more powerful at sea than Carthage; more flourishing in commerce than those first merchants; more secure against conquest; and, under a monarchy, more free than a commonwealth itself?

I dare not, nor indeed need I, here attempt a character where both the great and the amiable qualities shine forth in full perfection. All words are faint to speak what is universally felt and acknowledged by a happy people. Permit me, therefore, only to subscribe myself, with the truest zeal and veneration, MADAM,

Your Majesty's most humble, most dutiful, and most devoted servant,

JAMES THOMSON.

PREFACE.

It is not my intention, in this preface, to defend any faults that may be found in the following piece. I am afraid there are too many; but those who are best able to discover, will be most ready to pardon them. They alone know how difficult an undertaking the writing of a tragedy is: and this is a first attempt.

I beg leave only to mention the reason that determined me to make choice of this subject. What pleased me particularly, though perhaps it will not be least liable to objection with ordinary readers, was the great simplicity of the story. It is one, regular, and uniform, not charged with a multiplicity of incidents, and yet affording several revolutions of fortune, by which the passions may be excited, varied, and driven to their full tumult of emotion.

This unity of design was always sought after and admired by the ancients; and the most eminent among the moderns, who understood their writings, have chosen to imitate them in this, from an entire conviction that the reason of it must hold good in all ages. And here allow me to translate a passage from the celebrated Monsieur Racine, which contains all that I have to say on this head.

"We must not fancy that this rule has no other foundation but the caprice of those who made it. Nothing can touch us in tragedy but what is probable; and what probability is there that, in one day, should happen a multitude of things, which could scarce happen in several weeks? There are some who think that this simplicity is a mark of barrenness of invention; but they do not consider that, on the contrary, invention consists of making something out of nothing; and that this huddle of incidents has always been the refuge of poets who did not find in their genius either richness or force enough to engage their spectators for five acts together by a simple action, supported by the violence of passions, the beauty of sentiments, and the nobleness of expression."—I would not be understood to mean that all these things are to be found in my performance: I only show the reader what I aimed at, and how I would have pleased him, had it been in my power.

As to the character of *Sophonisba*, in drawing it I have confined myself to the truth of history. It were an affront to the age to suppose such a character out of nature, especially in a country which has produced so many great examples of public spirit and heroic virtues, even in the softer sex: and I had destroyed her character

entirely, had I not marked it with that strong love to her country, disdain of servitude, and inborn aversion to the Romans, by which all historians have distinguished her. Nor ought her marrying *Masinissa*, while her former husband was still alive, to be reckoned a blemish in her character; for, by the laws of Rome and Carthage, the captivity of the husband dissolved the marriage of course: as, among us, impotence or adultery; not to mention the reasons of a moral and public nature, which I have put into her own mouth in the scene betwixt her and *Syphax*.

This is all I have to say of the play itself; but I cannot conclude without owning my obligations to those concerned in the representation. They have indeed done me more than justice. Whatever was designed as amiable and engaging in *Masinissa*, shines out in Mr. Wilks's action. Mrs. Oldfield, in the character of *Sophonisba*, has excelled what, even in the fondness of an author, I could either wish or imagine. The grace, dignity, and happy variety of her action, have been universally applauded, and are truly admirable.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

MASINISSA, *King of Massylia.*

SYPHAX, *King of Masæsyliæ.*

NARVA, *friend to Masinissa.*

SCIPIO, *the Roman General.*

LÆLIUS, *his Lieutenant.*

SOPHONISBA.

PHŒNISSA, *her friend.*

Messenger, Slave, Guards, and Attendants.

SCENE.—*The Palace of Cirtha.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.

SOPHONISBA PHŒNISSA.

Soph. THIS hour, Phœnissa, this important hour, Or fixes me a queen, or from a throne Throws *Sophonisba* into Roman chains. Detested thought! For now his utmost force Collected, desperate, distress'd, and sore From battles lost; with all the rage of war, Ill-fated *Syphax* his last effort makes.

But say, thou partner of my hopes and fears, *Phœnissa*, say; while from the lofty tower Our straining eyes the field of battle sought, Ah! thought you not that our Numidian troops Gave up the bloody field, and scattering fled, Wild o'er the hills, from the rapacious sons Of still triumphant Rome?

Phæn. Perhaps they wheel'd, As is their custom, to return more fierce. Distrust not fortune, while you yet may hope; And think not, madam, *Syphax* can resign, But with his ebbing life, in this last field, At once a kingdom, and a queen he loves Beyond ambition's brightest wish: for whom, Nor moved by threats, nor bound by plighted faith, He scorn'd the Roman friendship (that fair name For slavery) and from the engagements broke Off *Scipio*, famed for every winning art, The towering genius of recover'd Rome. [blood]

Soph. Oh, name him not! These Romans stir my To too much rage. I cannot bear the fortune Of that proud people.—Said you not, *Phœnissa*, That *Syphax* loved me; which would fire his soul, And urge him on to death or conquest?—True, He loves me with the madness of desire; His every passion is a slave to love; Nor heeds he danger where I bid him go,

Nor leagues, nor interest. Hence these endless wars, These ravaged countries, these successless fights, Sustain'd by Carthage; whose defence alone, Not love, engaged my marriage-vows with his. But know you not, that in the Roman camp I have a lover too; a gallant, brave, And disappointed lover, full of wrath, Returning to a kingdom, whence the sword Of *Syphax* drove him?

Phæn.

Masinissa?

Soph.

He:

Young *Masinissa*, the Massylian king, The first addresser of my youth; for whom My bosom felt a fond beginning wish, Extinguish'd soon, when once by *Scipio*'s arts Won over he became the slave of Rome. E'er since, my heart has held him in contempt; And thrown out each idea of his worth, That there began to grow: nay, had it been As much enthrall'd and soft as hers who sits In secret shades, or by the falling stream, And wastes her being in unutter'd pangs, I would have broke, or cured it of its fondness.

Phæn. Heroic *Sophonisba*!

Soph.

No, *Phœnissa*;

It is not for the daughter of great *Asdrubal*, Descended from a long illustrious line Of Carthaginian heroes, who have oft Fill'd Italy with terror and dismay, And shook the walls of Rome, to pine in love, Like a deluded maid; to give her life, And heart high-beating in her country's cause, To mean domestic cares, and idle joys; Much less to one who stoops his neck to Rome, An enemy to Carthage—*Masinissa*. [flame,]
Phæn. Think not I mean to check that glorious That just ambition which exalts your soul,

Glows on your cheek, and lightens in your eye.
Yet would he had been yours, this rising prince !
For, trust me, fame is fond of Masinissa.
His courage, conduct, deep-experienced youth,
And vast unbroken spirit in distress,
Still rising stronger from the last defeat,
Are all the talk, and terror too, of Afric.

Who has not heard the story of his woes ?
How hard he came to his paternal realm :
Whence soon by Syphax' unrelenting hate,
And jealous Carthage driven, he with a few
Fled to the mountains. Then, I think, it was,
Hemm'd in a circle of impending rocks,
That all his followers fell, save fifty horse,
Who, thence escaped through secret paths abrupt,
Gain'd the Clupean plain. There overtook,
And urged by fierce surrounding foes, he burst
With four alone, sore wounded, through their ranks,
And all amidst a deep-swoln torrent plunged.
Seized with the whirling gulf two sunk ; and two,
With him obliquely hurried down the stream,
Swam to the farther shore. The astonish'd foes
Stood check'd and shivering on the gloomy brink,
And deem'd him lost in the devouring flood.
Meantime, the dauntless undespairing youth
Lay in a cave conceal'd ; curing his wounds
With mountain herbs, and on his horses fed.
Nor here, even at the lowest ebb of life,
Stoop'd his aspiring mind. What need I say,
How once again restored, and once again
Expell'd, among the Garamantian hills
He since has wander'd till the Roman arm
Reviv'd his cause ? and who shall reign alone,
Syphax or he, this day decides.

Soph. Enough.
Thou need'st not blazon thus his fame, Phœnissa :
Were he as glorious as the pride of woman
Could wish, in all her wantonness of thought ;
The joy of human-kind ; wise, valiant, good ;
With every praise, with every laurel crown'd ;
The warrior's wonder, and the virgin's sigh :
Yet this would cloud him o'er, this blemish all,
His means submission to the Roman yoke ;
That, false to Carthage, Afric, and himself,
With proffer'd hand and knee, he hither led
These ravagers of earth.—But while we talk,
The work of fate goes on ; even now perhaps
My dying country bleeds in every vein,
And the proud victor thunders at our gate.

SCENE II.

SOPHONISBA, PHŒNISSA, and to them a Messenger from the battle.

Soph. Ha ! whence art thou ? Speak ; though
thy bleeding wounds
Might well excuse thy tongue.

Mess. Madam, escaped
From yon dire field, alas ! I come—

Soph. No more.
At once thy meaning flashes o'er my soul.
O all my vanish'd hopes ! O fatal chance
Of undiscerning war ! And is all lost ?—
An universal ruin ?

Mess. Madam, all.
Of all our numerous host, scarce one is saved.
The king—

Soph. Ah ! what of him ?

Mess. His fiery steed,
By Masinissa, the Massylian prince,
Pierced, threw him headlong to his clustering foes :
And now he comes in chains.

Soph. O worst of ills !
Absolute gods ! All Afric is in chains !
The weeping world in chains !—Oh, is there not
A time, a righteous time, reserved in fate,
When these oppressors of mankind shall feel
The miseries they give ; and blindly fight
For their own fetters too ?—The conquering troops,
How points their motion ?

Mess. At my heels they came,
Loud-shouting, dreadful in a cloud of dust,
By Masinissa headed.

Soph. Hark ! arrived :
The murmuring cloud rolls frighted to the palace.—
Thou bleed'st to death, poor faithful wretch ; away,
And dress thy wounds, if life be worth thy care ;
Though Rome, methinks, will lose a slave in thee.
Would Sophonisba were as near the verge
Of boundless and immortal liberty !

SCENE III.

SOPHONISBA, PHŒNISSA.

(After a pause.)

Soph. And wherefore not ? When liberty is lost,
Let abject cowards live ; but in the brave
It were a treachery to themselves, enough
To merit chains. And is it fit for me,
Who in my veins, from Asdrubal derived,
Hold Carthaginian enmity to Rome ;
Who sold my joyless youth to Syphax' arms,
For her destruction ; is it fit for me
To sit in feeble grief, and trembling wait
The approaching victor's rage ? reserved in chains
To grace his triumph, and become the scorn
Of every Roman dame ?—Gods ! how my soul
Disdains the thought ! This, this shall set it free.

(Offers to stab herself.)

Phœn. Hold, Sophonisba, hold ! my friend ! my
queen !

For whom alone I live ! hold your rash hand,
North through your guardian bosom stab your country.
This is our last resort, and always sure.
The gracious gods are liberal of death ;
To that last blessing lend a thousand ways.
Think not I'd have you live to drag a chain,
And walk the triumph of insulting Rome.
No, by these tears of loyalty and love !
Ere I beheld so vile a sight, this hand
Should urge the faithful poniard to your heart,
And glory in the deed. But, while hope lives,
Let not the generous die. 'Tis late before
The brave despair.

Soph. Thou copy of my soul !
And now my friend indeed ! Show me but hope,
One glimpse of hope, and I'll renew my toils ;
Call patience, labour, fortitude again,
The vext unjoyous day, and sleepless night ;
Nor shrink at danger, any shape of death :
Show me the smallest hope ! Alas, Phœnissa,
Too fondly confident ! Hope lives not here,
Fled with her sister liberty beyond
The Garamantian hills, to some steep wild,
Some undiscover'd country, where the foot
Of Roman cannot come.

Phœn. Yes, there she lived

With Masinissa wounded and forlorn,
Amidst the serpent's hiss, and tiger's yell. —

Soph. Why namest thou him ?

Phen. Madam, in this forgive
My forward zeal ; from him proceeds our hope.
He loved you once ; nor is your form impair'd,
Time has matured it into stronger charms :
Ask his protection from the Roman power :
You must prevail ; for Sophonisba sure
From Masinissa cannot ask in vain. [country !

Soph. Now, by the prompting Genius of my
I thank thee for the thought. True, there is pain
Even in descending thus to beg protection
From that degenerate youth. But, oh ! for thee,
My sinking country, and again to gall
This hated Rome, what would I not endure ?
It shall be done, Phenissa ; though disgust
Hold back my struggling heart, it shall be done. —

But hark ; they come ; in this disorder'd tumult
It fits not Sophonisba to be seen.
I'll wait a calmer hour. — Let us retire.

SCENE IV.

MASINISSA, SYPHAX in chains, NARVA, Guards, &c.

Soph. Is there no dungeon in this city, dark
As is my troubled soul ? That thus I am brought
To my own palace ; to those rooms of state,
Wont in another manner to receive me,
With other signs of royalty than these.

(Looking on his chains.

Mas. I will not wound thee, nor insult thee,
With a recital of thy tyrant crimes. [Syphax,
A captive here I see thee, fallen below
My most revengeful wish ; and all the rage,
The nobly fury that this morn inflamed me,
Is sunk to soft compassion. In the field,
The perilous front of war, there is the scene
Of brave revenge : and I have sought thee there,
Keen as the wounded lion seeks his foe.
But when a broken enemy disarm'd
And helpless lies ; a falling sword, an eye
With pity flowing, and an arm as weak
As infant softness, then become the brave.

Believe it, Syphax, my relenting soul
Melts at thy fate.

Soph. This, this, is all I dread,
All I detest ; this insolence refined,
This affectation of superior goodness.
Pitied by thee ! — Is there a form of death,
Of torture, and of infamy like that ?
Ye partial gods, to what have you debased me ?
I felt your worst ; why should I fear you more ?

Hear me, vain youth ! take notice — I abhor
Thy mercy, loath it. — Use me like a slave ;
As I would thee, (delicious thought !) wert thou
Here crouching in my power.

Mas. Outrageous man !
Thou canst not drive me, by thy bitterest rage,
To an unmanly deed ; not all thy wrongs
Can force my patient soul to stain its virtue.

Soph. I cannot wrong thee. When we drive the
spear

Into the monster's heart, or crush the serpent,
Can that be call'd a wrong ? 'Tis self-defence.

Mas. I'm loth to hurt thee more. — The tyrant
Too fierce already in thy rankled breast. [works
But since thou seem'st to rank me with thyself,
With great destroyers, with perfidious kings ;

I must reply to thy licentious tongue ;
Bid thee remember, whose accursed sword
Began this work of death ; who broke the ties,
The holy ties, attested by the gods,
Which bind the nations in the bond of peace ;
Who meanly took advantage of my youth,
Unskill'd in arms, unsettled on my throne,
And drove me to the desert, there to dwell
With kinder monsters ; who my cities sack'd,
My country pillaged, and my subjects murder'd ;
Who still pursued me with inveterate hate ;
When open force proved vain, with ruffian arts,
The villain's dagger, base assassination.
And for no reason all. Brute violence
Alone thy plea. — What the least provocation,
Say, canst thou but pretend ?

Soph. I needed none.

Nature has in my being sown the seeds
Of enmity to thine. — Nay, mark me this :
Couldst thou restore me to my former state,
Strike off these chains, give me my crown again ;
Yet must I still, implacable to thee,
Seek eagerly thy death, or die myself.
Life cannot hold us both ! — Unequal gods !
Who love to disappoint mankind, and take
All vengeance to yourselves ; why to the point
Of my long-flatter'd wishes did ye lift me ;
Then sink me down so low ? Just as I aim'd
The glorious stroke that was to make me happy,
Why did you blast my strong-extended arm ?
But that to mock us is your cruel sport ?
What else is human life ?

Mas. Thus always join'd
With an inhuman heart, and brutal manners,
Is irreligion to the ruling gods ;
Whose schemes our peevish ignorance arraigns,
Our thoughtless pride. — Thy lost condition, Syphax,
Is nothing to the tumult of thy breast.
There lies the sting of evil, there the drop
That poisons nature. Ye mysterious powers !
Whose ways are ever-gracious, ever-just,
As ye think wisest, best, dispose of me ;
But, whether through your gloomy depths I wander,
Or on your mountains walk ; give me the calm,
The steady, smiling soul ; where wisdom sheds
Eternal sunshine and eternal peace.
Then, if misfortune comes, she brings along
The bravest virtues. And so many great
Illustrious spirits have conversed with woe,
Have in her school been taught, as are enough
To consecrate distress, and make ambition
Even wish the frown beyond the smile of fortune.

Soph. Torture and racks ! This is the common
Of insolent success, unsuffering pride ; [trick
This prate of patience, and I know not what :
'Tis all a lie, impracticable rant ;
And only tends to make me scorn thee more.

But why this talk ? In mercy send me hence ;
Yet — ere I go — Oh save me from distraction !
I know, hot youth, thou burnest for my queen ;
But by the majesty of ruin'd kings,
And that commanding glory which surrounds her,
I charge thee touch her not !

Mas. No, Syphax, no.
Thou need'st not charge me. That were mean indeed,
A triumph that to thee. But could I stoop
Again to love her ; thou, what right hast thou,
A captive, to her bed ? Thy bonds divorce
And free her from thy power. All laws in this,
Roman and Carthaginian, all agree.

Syph. Here, here, begins the bitterness of ruin ;
Here my chains grind me first !

Mas. Poor Sophonisba !
She too becomes the prize of conquering Rome ;
What most her heart abhors. Alas, how hard
Will slavery sit on her exalted soul !
She never will endure it, she will die.
For not a Roman burns with nobler ardour,
A higher sense of liberty than she ;
And though she married thee, her only stain,
False to my youth, and faithless to her vows,
Yet, I must own it, from a worthy cause,
From public spirit, did her fault proceed.

Syph. Must I then hear her praise from thee ?
Confusion !

Oh ! for a lonely dungeon ! where I rather
Would talk with my own groans, and breathe
revenge,
Than in the mansions of the bless'd with thee.
Hell ! Whither must I go ?

Mas. Unhappy man !
And is thy breast determined against peace,
On comfort shut ?

Syph. On all, but death, from thee.

Mas. Narva, be Syphax thy peculiar care ;
And use him well, with tenderness and honour :

This evening Lælius, and to-morrow Scipio,
To Cirta comes. Then let the Romans take
Their prisoner.

Syph. There shines a gleam of hope
Across the gloom.—From thee deliver'd !—Ease
Breathes in that thought—Lead on—My heart
grows lighter !

SCENE V.

Mas. What dreadful havock in the human breast
The passions make, when unconfined, and mad,
They burst unguided by the mental eye,
The light of reason, which in various ways
Points them to good, or turns them back from ill ?

O save me from the tumult of the soul !
From the wild beast within !—For circling sands,
When the swift whirlwind whelms them o'er the
lands ;

The roaring deeps that to the clouds arise,
While through the storm the darting lightning flies ;
The monster-brood to which the land gives birth,
The blazing city, and the gaping earth ;
All deaths, all tortures, in one pang combined,
Are gentle, to the tempest of the mind.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

MASINISSA, NARVA.

Mas. Thou good old man, by whom my youth was
form'd,

The firm companion of my various life,
I own, 'tis true, that Sophonisba's image
Lives in my bosom still ; and at each glance
I take in secret of the bright idea,
A strange disorder seizes on my soul,
Which burns with stronger glory. Need I say,
How once she had my vows ? Till Scipio came,
(Resistless man !) like a descending god,
And snatch'd me from the Carthaginian side,
To nobler Rome ; beneath whose laurel'd brow,
And favouring eye, the nations grow polite,
Humane, and happy. Then thou mayst remember,
Such is this woman's high impetuous spirit,
That all-controlling love she bears her country,
Her Carthage ; that for this she sacrificed
To Syphax, unbelov'd, her blooming years,
And won him off from Rome.

Nar. My generous prince !
Applauding Afric of thy choice approves :
Fame claps her wings, and virtue smiles on thee ;
Of peace thou softener, and thou soul of war !
But, oh ! beware of that fair foe to glory,
Woman ! and most, of Carthaginian woman !
Who has not heard of fatal Punic guile ?
Of their stolen conquests ? their insidious leagues ?
Their Asdrubals ? their Hannibals ? with all
Their wily heroes ? And, if such their men,
What must their women be ?

Mas. You make me smile.
I thank thy honest zeal. But never dread
The firmness of my heart ; the strong attachment
I hold to Rome, to Scipio, and to glory.
Indeed, I cannot, would not quite forget

The grace of Sophonisba : how she look'd,
And talk'd, and moved, a Pallas or a Juno !
Accomplish'd even in trifles, when she stoop'd
From higher thoughts, and with a soften'd eye,
Gave her quick spirit into gayer life :
Then every word was liveliness and wit ;
We heard the Muses' song ; and the dance swam
Through all the maze of harmony. Believe me,
I do not flatter ; yet my panting soul
To Scipio's friendship, to the fair pursuit
Of fame, and for my people's happiness,
Resign'd this Sophonisba ; and though now
Constrain'd by sweet necessity to see her
A captive in my power, yet will I still
Resign her.

Nar. I'll not doubt thy fortitude,
My Masinissa, thy exalted purpose
Not to be lost in love ; but ah ! we know not
Oft, till experience sighs it to the soul,
The boundless witchcraft of ensnaring woman,
And our own slippery hearts. From Scipio learn
The temperance of heroes. I'll recount
The instructive story, what these eyes beheld :
Perhaps you've heard it ; but 'tis pleasing still,
Though told a thousand times.

Mas. I burn to hear it.
Lost by my late misfortunes in the desert,
I lived a stranger to the voice of fame,
To Scipio's last exploits. Indulge me now.
Great actions, even recounted, raise the mind ;
But when a friend has done them, then, my Narva,
They doubly charm us ; then with more than wonder,
Even with a sort of vanity, we listen.

Nar. When to his glorious first essay in war,
New Carthage fell ; there all the flower of Spain
Were kept in hostage ; a full field presenting
For Scipio's generosity to shine.
And then it was, that when the hero heard

How I to thee belong'd, he with large gifts,
And friendly words, dismiss'd me.

Mas. I remember ;
And in his favour that engaged me first.
But to thy story.

Nar. What with admiration
Struck every heart, was this :—A noble virgin,
Conspicuous far o'er all the captive dames,
Was mark'd the general's prize. She wept, and
blush'd,

Young, fresh, and blooming like the morn. An eye,
As when the blue sky trembles through a cloud
Of purest white. A secret charm combined
Her features, and infused enchantment through
Her shape was harmony.—But eloquence [them.
Beneath her beauty fails : which seem'd on purpose,
By nature lavish'd on her, that mankind
Might see the virtue of a hero tried
Almost beyond the stretch of human force.
Soft as she past along, with downcast eyes,
Where gentle sorrow swell'd, and now and then
Dropt o'er her modest cheek a trickling tear,
The Roman legions languish'd ; and hard war
Felt more than pity. Even their chief himself,
As on his high tribunal raised he sat,
Turn'd from the dangerous sight, and chiding ask'd
His officers, if by this gift they meant
To cloud his glory in its very dawn.

Mas. Oh gods ! my fluttering heart ! On ; stop
not, Narva.

Nar. She, question'd of her birth, in trembling
accents,

With tears and blushes broken, told her tale.
But when he found her royally descended,
Of her old captive parents the sole joy ;
And that a hapless Celtiberian prince,
Her lover, and beloved, forgot his chains,
His lost dominions, and for her alone
Wept out his tender soul ; sudden the heart
Of this young, conquering, loving, godlike Roman,
Felt all the great divinity of virtue.
His wishing youth stood check'd, his tempting power
Restrain'd by kind humanity.—At once
He for her parents and her lover call'd.—
The various scene imagine : how his troops
Look'd dubious on, and wonder'd what he meant :
While, stretch'd below, the trembling suppliants lay,
Rack'd by a thousand mingling passions ; fear,
Hope, jealousy, disdain, submission, grief,
Anxiety, and love in every shape :
To these as different sentiments succeeded,
As mix'd emotions, when the man divine
Thus the dread silence to the lover broke :
" We both are young, both charm'd. The right of war
Has put thy beauteous mistress in my power ;
With whom I could, in the most sacred ties,
Live out a happy life ; but know that Romans
Their hearts as well as enemies can conquer.
Then take her to thy soul ; and with her take
Thy liberty and kingdom. In return
I ask but this. When you behold these eyes,
These charms, with transport ; be a friend to Rome."

Mas. There spoke the soul of Scipio.—But the
lovers ?

Nar. Joy and ecstatic wonder held them mute ;
While the loud camp, and all the clustering crowd
That hung around, rang with repeated shouts.
Fame took the alarm, and through resounding Spain
Blew fast the fair report ; which, more than arms,
Admiring nations to the Romans gain'd.

Mas. My friend in glory ! thy awaken'd prince
Springs at thy noble tale. It fires my soul,
And nerves each thought anew ; apt oft, perhaps
Too much, too much, to slacken into love.
But now the soft oppression flies ; and all
My mounting powers expand to deeds like these.
Who, who would live, my Narva, just to breathe
This idle air, and indolently run,
Day after day, the still-returning round
Of life's mean offices, and sickly joys ?
But, in the service of mankind, to be
A guardian god below :—still to employ
The mind's brave ardour in heroic aims,
Such as may raise us o'er the groveling herd,
And make us shine for ever !—That is life.
Bleed every vein about me ; every nerve
With anguish tremble ; every sinew ache ;
The third time may I lose my crown ; again
Wander the false inhospitable Syrts ;
If, to reward my toils, the gods will grant me
To share the wreath of fame on Scipio's brow.

But see, she comes, the beauteous Sophonisba !
Behold, my friend, mark her majestic port !

SCENE II.

MASINISSA, SOPHONISBA, NARVA, PHŒNISSA.

Soph. Behold, victorious prince ! the scene
reversed ;
And Sophonisba kneeling here ; a captive,
O'er whom the gods, thy fortune, and thy virtue,
Give thee unquestion'd power of life and death.
If such a one may raise her suppliant voice,
Once music to thy ear ; if she may touch
Thy knee, thy purple, and thy victor-hand ;
O listen, Masinissa ! Let thy soul
Intensely listen ; while I fervent pray,
And strong adjure thee, by that regal state,
In which with equal pomp we lately shone ;
By the Numidian name, our common boast ;
And by those household gods (who may, I wish,
With better omens take thee to this palace,
Than Syphax hence they sent ;) as is thy pleasure,
In all beside determine of my fate ;
This, this alone I beg : never, O never !
Into the cruel, proud, and hated power
Of Romans let me fall. Since angry Heaven
Will have it so, that I must be a slave,
And that a galling chain must bind these hands,
It were some little softening in my doom,
To call a kindred son of the same climate,
A native of Numidia, my lord.
But if thou canst not save me from the Romans,
If this sad favour be beyond thy power ;
At least to give me death is what thou canst :—
Here strike—my naked bosom courts thy sword ;
And my last breath shall bless thee, Masinissa !

Mas. Rise, Sophonisba, rise. To see thee thus
Is a revenge I scorn ; and all the man
Within me, though much injured by thy pride,
And spirit too tempestuous for thy sex,
Yet blushes to behold thus at my feet,
Thus prostrate low, her for whom kings have kneel'd ;
The fairest, but the falsest of her sex.

Soph. Spare thy reproach.—'Tis cruel thus to
lose,
In rankling discord, and ungenerous strife,
The few remaining moments that divide me

From the most loathed of evils, Roman bondage !—
 Yes, shut thy heart against me ; shut thy heart
 Against compassion, every human thought,
 Even recollected love : yet know, rash youth !
 That when thou seest me swell their lofty triumph,
 Thou seest thyself in me. This is my day ;
 To-morrow will be thine. But here, be sure,
 Here will I lie on this vile earth forlorn,
 Of hope abandon'd, since despised by thee ;
 These locks all loose and sordid in the dust ;
 This sullied bosom growing to the ground ;
 Till the remorseless soldier comes, more fierce
 From recent blood ; and, in thy very eye,
 Lays raging his rude sanguinary grasp
 On these weak limbs, and tortures them with chains.
 Then if no friendly steel, no nectar'd draught
 Of deadly poison, can enlarge my soul,
 It will indignant burst from a slave's body,
 And, join'd to mighty Dido, scorn ye all.

Mas. Oh, Sophonisba ! 'tis not safe to hear thee ;
 And I mistook my heart, to trust it thus.
 Hence let me fly.

Soph. You shall not, Masinissa !
 Here will I hold you, tremble here for ever ;
 Here unremitting grow, till you consent.
 And canst thou think, oh ! canst thou think to leave
 Exposed, defenceless, wretched, here alone, [me,
 A prey to Romans flush'd with blood and conquest,
 The subject of their scorn, or baser love ?
 Sure Masinissa cannot : and though changed,
 Though cold as that averted look he wears,
 Sure love can ne'er in generous breasts be lost
 To that degree, as not from shame and outrage
 To save what once they loved.

Mas. Enchantment ! madness !—
 What wouldst thou, Sophonisba !—O my heart !
 My treacherous heart !

Soph. What would I, Masinissa ?—
 My mean request sits blushing on my cheek.
 To be thy slave, young prince, is what I beg ;
 Here Sophonisba kneels to be thy slave ;
 Yet kneels in vain.—But thou'rt a slave thyself,
 And canst not from the Romans save one woman ;
 Her who was once the triumph of thy soul,
 Ere they seduced it by their lying glory.
 Immortal gods ! and am I fallen so low ?
 Scorn'd by a lover ? by the man whom once
 My heart, alas ! too much inclined to love,
 Before he sunk into the slave of Rome ?—
 Nought can be worth this baseness, life nor empire.
 I loathe me for it.—On this kinder earth
 Then leave me, leave me to despair and death !

Mas. I cannot bear her tears.—Rise, quickly
 In all the conquering majesty of charms, [rise ;
 O Sophonisba ! rise ; while here I swear,
 By the tremendous powers that rule mankind !
 By heaven, and earth, and hell ! by love and glory !
 The Romans shall not hurt you—Romans cannot ;
 For Rome is generous as the gods themselves ;
 And honours, not insults, a generous foe.
 Yet, since you dread them, take this royal hand,
 The pledge of surety, by which kings are bound ;
 By which I hold you mine, and vow to treat you,
 With all the softness of remember'd love,
 All that can soothe thy fate, and make thee happy.

Soph. I thank thee, Masinissa : now the same,
 The same bright youth, exalted, full of soul,
 With whom, in happier days, I used to pass
 The tender hour ; while, dawning fair in love,
 All song and sweetness, life set joyous out ;

Ere the black tempest of ambition rose,
 And drove us different ways.—Thus dress'd in war,
 In nodding plumes, o'ercastr with sullen thought,
 With purpos'd vengeance dark, I knew thee not ;
 But now breaks out the beauteous sun anew,
 The gay Numidian shines, who warm'd me once,
 Whose love was glory.—Vain ideas, hence !
 Long since, my heart, to nobler passions known,
 Has your acquaintance scorn'd.

Mas. Oh ! while you talk,
 Enchanting fair one ! my deluded thought
 Runs back to days of love ; when fancy still
 Found worlds of beauty, ever rising new
 To the transported eye : when flattering hope
 Form'd endless prospects of increasing bliss ;
 And still the credulous heart believed them all,
 Even more than love could promise.—But the scene
 Is full of danger for a youthful eye ;
 I must not, dare not, will not look that way :
 O hide it, wisdom, glory, from my view !
 Or in sweet ruin I shall sink again.

Distemper clouds thy cheek ; thy colour goes.—
 Retire, and from the troubles of the day
 Repose thy weary soul, worn out with care,
 And rough unhappy thought.

Soph. May Masinissa
 Ne'er want the goodness he has shown to me.

SCENE III.

MASINISSA, NARVA.

Mas. The danger's o'er : I've heard the siren's
 Yet still to virtue hold my steady course. [song ;
 I mark'd thy kind concern, thy friendly fears,
 And own them just ; for she has beauty, Narva,
 So full, so perfect, with so great a soul
 Inform'd, so raised with animating spirit,
 As strikes like lightning from the hand of Jove,
 And raises love to glory.

Nar. Ah, my prince !
 Too true, it is too true ; her fatal charms
 Are powerful, and to Masinissa's heart
 Know but too well the way. And art thou sure,
 That the soft poison, which within thy veins
 Lay unextinguish'd, is not roused anew,
 Is not this moment working through thy soul ?
 Dost thou not love ?—Confess.

Mas. What said my friend
 Of poison ?—love ?—of loving Sophonisba ?—
 Yes, I admire her, wonder at her beauty,
 And he who does not is as dull as earth,
 The cold unanimated form of man,
 Ere lighted up with the celestial fire.
 Where'er she goes, still admiration gazes,
 And listens while she talks. Even thou thyself,
 Who saw'st her with the malice of a friend,
 Even thou thyself admirest her.—Dost thou not ?—
 Say, speak sincerely.

Nar. She has charms indeed ;
 But has she charms like virtue ? Though majestic,
 Does she command us with a force like glory ?

Mas. All glory's in her eye ! Perfection thence
 Looks from its throne ; and on her ample brow
 Sits majesty. Her features glow with life,
 Warm with heroic soul. Her mien ! she walks
 As when a towering goddess treads the earth.
 But when her language flows ; when such a mind
 Descends to soothe, to sigh, to weep, to grasp

The tottering knee ! oh ! Narva, Narva, oh !
Expression here is dumb.

Nar. Alas ! my lord,
Is this the talk of sober admiration ?
Are these the sallies of a heart at ease ?
Of Scipio's friend ? Is this thy steady virtue ?

Mas. I tell thee once again, too cautious man,
That when a woman begs, a matchless woman,
A woman once beloved, a fallen queen,
A Sophonisba ! when she twines her charms
Around our soul, and all her power of looks,
Of tears, of sighs, of softness, plays upon us ;
He's more or less than man who can resist her.
For me, my steadfast soul approves, nay more,
Exults in the protection it has promised :
And nought, though plighted honour did not bind me,
Should shake the virtuous purpose of my heart ;
Nought, by the avenging gods ! who heard my vow,
And hear me now again.

Nar. And was it then
For this you conquer'd ?

Mas. Yes, and triumph in it.
This was my fondest wish ; the very point,
The plume of glory, the delicious prize
Of bleeding years. I must have been a brute,
A greater monster than Numidia breeds,
A horror to myself ; if, on the ground,
Cast vilely from me, I the illustrious fair
Had led to bondage, bitterness, and death.

Nor is there aught in war worth what I feel ;
In pomp and hollow state, like the sweet sense
Of infelicitous bliss, which the reflection gives me,
Of saving thus such excellence and beauty
From what her generous soul abhors the most.

Nar. My friend ! my royal lord ! alas ! you slide,
You sink from virtue.—On the giddy brink
Of fate you stand.—One step, and all is lost !

Mas. No more, no more ! if this is being lost,
And rushing down the precipice of fate,
Then down I go, far, far beyond the reach
Of scrupulous dull precaution.—Leave me, Narva ;
I want to be alone, to find some shade,
Some solitary gloom ; there to shake off
These harsh tumultuous cares that vex my life,
This sick ambition on itself recoiling ;
And there to listen to the gentle voice,
The sigh of peace, something, I know not what,
That whispers transport to my heart.—Farewell.

SCENE IV.

Nar. (alone.) Struck, and he knows it not.—So
when the field,
Elate in heart, the warrior scorns to yield ;
The streaming blood can scarce convince his eyes,
Nor will he feel the wound by which he dies.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Mas. (alone.) In vain I wander through the
shade for peace ;
'Tis with the calm alone, the pure of heart,
That there the goddess talks :—but in my breast,
Some busy thought, some secret eating pang,
Still restless throbs ; on Sophonisba still
Earnest, intent, devoted all to her.—
What may this mean ?—'Tis love, almighty love !
Returning on me with a stronger tide.
Come to my breast, thou rosy, smiling god !
Come unconfined ! bring all thy joys along,
All thy soft cares, and mix them copious here.—
Quick, let me fly to her ; and there forget
This tedious absence, war, ambition, noise,
Friendship itself, the vanity of fame,
And all but love—for love is more than all.

SCENE II.

MASINISSA, NARVA.

Mas. Welcome again, my friend.—Come nearer,
Narva ;
Lend me thine arm, and I will tell thee all ;
Unfold my secret heart, whose every pulse
With Sophonisba beats—Nay, hear me out.—
Swift, as I mused, the conflagration spread ;
At once too strong, too general, to be quench'd.
I love, and I approve it ; doat upon her ;
Even think these minutes lost I talk with thee.
Heavens ! what emotions have possess'd my soul !
Snatch'd by a moment into years of passion.

Nar. Ah, Masinissa !—

Mas. Argue not against me.
Talk down the circling winds that lift the desert ;
And when, by lightning fired, the forests blaze,
Talk down the flame, but not my stronger love.
I have for love a thousand thousand reasons,
Dear to the heart and potent o'er the soul.
My every thought, reflection, memory, all
Are a perpetual spring of tenderness ;
Oh, Sophonisba ! I am wholly thine.

Nar. Is this deceitful day then come to nought,
This day that set thee on a double throne ?
That gave thee Syphax chain'd, thy deadly foe ?
With perfect conquest crown'd thee, perfect glory ?
Is it so soon eclipsed ? And does yon sun,
Yon setting sun, who this fair morning saw thee
Ride through the ranks of long-extended war,
As radiant as himself ; and when the storm
Began, beheld thee tread the rising surge
Of battle high, and drive it on the foe ;
Does he now, blushing, see thee sunk so weak ?
Caught in a smile ? the captive of a look ?—
I cannot name it without tears.

Mas. Away !
I'm sick of war, of the destroying trade,
Smoothed o'er and gilded with the name of glory.
In vain you spread the martial field to me,
My happier eyes are turn'd another way,
Behold it not ; or, if they do, behold it
Shrunk up, far off, a visionary scene ;
As to the waking man appears the dream.

Nar. Or rather as realities appear,
The virtue, pomp, and dignities of life,
In sick disorder'd dreams.

Mas. Think not I scorn

The task of heroes, when oppression rages,
And lawless violence confounds the world.
Who would not bleed with transport for his country,
Tear every tender passion from his heart,
And greatly die to make a people happy,
Ought not to taste of happiness himself,
And is low-soul'd indeed.—But sure, my friend,
There is a time for love ; or life were vile,
A tedious circle of unjoyous days,
With senseless hurry fill'd, distasteful, wretched ;
Till love comes smiling in, and brings his sweets,
His healing sweets, soft cares, transporting joys,
That make the poor account of life complete,
And justify the gods.

Nar. Mistaken prince,
I blame not love. But—

Mas. Slander not my passion.
I've suffer'd thee too far.—Take heed, old man ;—
Love will not bear an accusation, Narva.

Nar. I'll speak the truth, when truth and
friendship call,

Nor fear thy frown unkind. Thou hast no right
To Sophonisba ; she belongs to Rome.

Mas. Ha ! she belongs to Rome.—'Tis true.—
My thoughts,

Where have you wander'd, not to think of this ?
Think ere I promised ? ere I loved ?—Confusion !
I know not what to say.—I should have loved,
Though Jove in muttering thunder had forbid it.
But Rome will not refuse so small a boon,
Whose gifts are kingdoms : Rome must grant it
One captive to my wish, one poor request ; [sure,
So small to them, but oh ! so dear to me.
In this my heart confides.

Nar. Delusive love !
Through what wild projects is the frantic mind
Beguiled by thee.—And think'st thou that the
Romans,

The senators of Rome, these gods on earth,
Wise, steady to the right, severely just,
All uncorrupt, and, like eternal fate,
Not to be moved, will listen to the sigh
Of idle love ? They who, when virtue calls,
Will not the voice itself of nature hear,
But bid their children bleed before their eyes ;
Will they regard the light fantastic pangs
Of a fond heart ; and with thy kingdom, give thee
Their most inveterate foe, from their firm side,
Like Syphax, to delude thee, and the point
Of their own bounty on themselves to turn ?—
Thou canst not hope it sure.—Impossible !

Mas. What shall I do ?—Be now the friend
exerted.

For love and honour press me ; love and honour,
All that is dear and excellent in life,
All that or soothes the man or lifts the hero,
Engage my soul.

Nar. Rash was your vow, my lord.
I know not what to counsel. When you vow'd,
You vow'd was not in your power to grant ;
And therefore 'tis not binding.

Mas. Never ! Never !
Oh never will I falsify that vow !

Ere then destruction seize me !—Yes, ye Romans,
If it be so, there, take your kingdoms back,
Your friendship, your esteem, all, but her.—

Hold—Let me think a while—It shall be so !
By all the inspiring gods that prompt my thought,
This very night shall solemnise our vows ;
And the next joyous sun that visits Afric,

See Sophonisba seated on my throne.—
Then must they spare my queen.—They will not,
surely,

They will not dare to force my consort from me.

Nar. And is it possible ?—Ye gods that rule us !
Can Masinissa, in his pride of youth,
In his meridian glory shining wide,
The light of Afric, can the friend of Scipio
Take a false woman to his nuptial bed,
Who scorn'd him for a tyrant old and cruel,
His rancorous foe, and gave her untouch'd bloom,
Her spring of charms, to Syphax ?

Mas. Cursed remembrance !

This, this, has thrown a serpent to my heart,
While it o'erflow'd with tenderness, with joy,
With all the sweetness of exulting love :

Now nought but gall is there, and burning poison.—
Yes, it was so.—Curse on her vain ambition !

What had her meddling sex to do with states ?
Forsook for him, just gods ! for hateful Syphax,

My tender faithful love for his gross passion !
The thought is hell !—Oh, I had treasured up

A world of indignation, years of scorn ;
But her sad suppliant witchcraft soothed it down.—

Where is she now, that it may burst upon her ?
Haste, bring her to me ; though my plighted faith

Shall save her from the Romans, yet I'll tell her,
That I will never, never see her more !—

Ha ! there she comes.—Pernicious fair one !—
Leave me.

SCENE III.

SOPHONISBA, MASINISSA.

Soph. Forgive this quick return.—The rage,
confusion,

And mingled passions of this luckless day,
Made me forget another warm request

I had to beg of generous Masinissa :
For oh ! to whom, save to the generous, can

The miserable fly ?—But much disturb'd
You look, and scowl upon me a denial.

Repentance frowns on your contracted brow ;
Already, weary of my sinking fate,

You seem to droop ; and for unhappy Syphax
I shall implore in vain.

Mas. For Syphax ? vengeance !
And canst thou mention him ? Oh ! grant me breath.

Soph. I know, young prince, how deep he has
provoked thee ;

How keen he sought thy youth ; through what a fire
Of great distress, from which you come the brighter.

On mere indifferent objects, common bounty
Will shower relief ; but when our bitterest foe

Lies sunk, disarm'd, and desolate, then ! then !
To feel the mercies of a pitying god,

To raise him from the dust, and that best way
To triumph o'er him, is heroic goodness.

Oh, let unhappy Syphax touch thy heart,
Victorious Masinissa !

Mas. Monstrous this !
Still dost thou blast me with that cursed name !

The very name thy conscious guilt should shun.
Had he but driven me from my native throne,

From regal pomp and luxury, to dwell
Among the forest beasts ; to bear the beam

Of red Numidian suns, and the dank dew
Of cold unshelter'd nights ; to mix with wolves,

To hunt with hungry tigers for my prey,
And thirst with dipsads on the burning sand ;
I could have thank'd him for his angry lesson ;
The fair occasion that his rage afforded
Of learning patience, fortitude, and hope,
Still rising stronger on incumbent fate.
But there is one unpardonable outrage,
That scorches up the tear in pity's eye,
And even sweet mercy's self converts to gall.
I cannot—will not name it.—Down my heart,
My swelling heart !

Soph. Ah ! whence this sudden storm,
That hurries all thy soul ?

Mas. And dost thou ask ?
Ask thy own faithless heart ; snatch'd from my
vows,

From the warm wishes of my springing youth,
And given to that old hated monster Syphax—
Perfidious Sophonisba !

Soph. Nay, no more ;
With too much truth I can return thy charge.
Why didst thou drive me to that cruel choice ?
Why leave me, with my country, to destruction ?
Why break thy love, thy faith, and join the
Romans ?

Mas. By heavens ! the Romans were my better
genius,
Saved me from shame, and form'd my youth to glory.
But for the Romans, I had been a savage,
A wretch like Syphax, a forgotten thing,
The tool of Carthage.

Soph. Meddle not with Carthage,
Impatient youth ! for that I will not bear ;
Though I am here thy slave, I will not bear it.
Not one base word of Carthage—on thy soul !

Mas. How vain thy frenzy !—Go, command
thy slaves,

Thy fools, thy Syphaxes : but I will speak,
Speak loud of Carthage, call it false, ungenerous.
The Romans are the light, the glory—

Soph. Romans !
Perdition on the Romans !—on their friends !
On all—but thee. The Romans are the scourge
Of the vext world, destroyers of mankind,
And all beneath the smooth dissembling mask
Of justice and compassion ! as if slave
Was but another name for civilised.

Against thy tyrant power, each generous sword
Of every nation should be drawn.—While Carthage
Unblemish'd rises on the base of commerce,
Founds her fair empire on that common good,
And asks of Heaven nought but the winds and tides
To carry plenty, letters, science, wealth,
Civility, and grandeur, round the world.

Mas. No more compare them ; for the gods
Declare for Rome. [themselves]

Soph. It was not always so.
The gods declared for Hannibal, when Italy
Blazed all around him, all her streams ran blood ;
And when at Trebia, Thrasymene, and Cannæ,
The Carthaginian sword with Roman blood
Was drunk.—Oh ! that he then, on that dread day,
While lifeless consternation blacken'd Rome,
Had razed the accursed city to the ground,
And saved the world !—When will it come again,
A day so glorious, and so big with vengeance
On those my soul abhors ?

Mas. Avert it, Heaven !
The Romans not enslave, but save the world
From Carthaginian rage—

Soph. I'll bear no more !
Nor tenderness, nor life, nor liberty,
Nothing shall make me bear it.—Rather, rather,
Detested as ye are, ye Romans, take me ;
Oh ! pitying take me to your nobler chains,
And save me from this abject youth, your slave !—
How canst thou kill me thus ?—

Mas. I meant it not.
I only meant to tell thee, haughty fair one !
How this alone might bind me to the Romans ;
That, in a frail and sliding hour, they snatch'd me
From the perdition of thy love, which fell,
Like baleful lightning, where I most could wish,
And proved destruction to my mortal foe.—
Oh, pleasing ! fortunate !

Soph. I thank them too.
By heavens ! for once, I love them ; since they
turn'd

My better thoughts from thee ; thou—but I will not
Give thee the name thy mean servility
From my just scorn deserves.

Mas. Oh ! freely call me
By every name thy fury can inspire ;
Delight me with thy hate.—I love no more—
It will not hurt me, Sophonisba.—Love !
Long since I gave it to the passing winds,
And would not be a lover for the world.

A lover is the very fool of nature,
Made sick by his own wantonness of thought,
His fever'd fancy : while, to your own charms
Imputing all, you swell with boundless pride.
Shame on the wretch ! he should be driven from
To live with Asian slaves, in one soft herd ; [men,
All worthless, all ridiculous together.

For me this moment here I mean to bid
Farewell, a glad farewell, to love and thee.

Soph. With all my soul, farewell !—Yet ere you go,
Know that my spirit burns as high as thine,
As high to glory, and as low to love.
Thy promises are void ; and I absolve thee,
Here in the presence of the listening gods.—
Take thy repented vows.—To proud Cornelia
I'd rather be a slave, to Scipio's mother,
Than queen of all Numidia, by the favour
Of him who dares insult the helpless thus.

[Pausing.]

Still dost thou stay ? behold me then again,
Hopeless and wild, a lost abandon'd slave.
And now thy brutal purpose must be gain'd,
Away, thou cruel and ungenerous, go !

Mas. No, not for worlds would I resume my
Dishonour blast me then ! all kind of ills [vow !
Fill up my cup of bitterness and shame,
When I resign thee to triumphant Rome.

Oh, lean not thus dejected to the ground !
The sight is misery.—What roots me here ?

[Aside.]

Alas ! I have urged my foolish heart too far ;
And love depress'd, recoils with greater force.—
Oh, Sophonisba !

Soph. By thy pride she dies ;
Inhuman prince !

Mas. Thine is the triumph, love !
By heaven and earth ! I cannot hold it more.
Wretch that I was, to crush the unhappy thus ;
The fairest too, the dearest of her sex ;
For whom my soul could die.—Turn, quickly turn,
O Sophonisba ! my beloved ! my glory !
Turn and forgive the violence of love,
Of love that knows no bounds !

Soph. And can it be ?
Can that soft passion prove so fierce of heart,
As on the tears of misery, the sighs
Of death, to feast ; to torture what it loves ?

Mas. Yes, it can be, thou goddess of my soul,
Whose each emotion is but varied love ;
All over love, its powers, its passions, all ;
Its anger, indignation, fury, love ;
Its pride, disdain, even detestation, love :
And when it, wild, resolves to love no more,
Then is the triumph of excessive love.

Didst thou not mark me, mark the dubious rage
That tore my heart with anguish while I talk'd ?
Thou didst ; and must forgive so kind a fault.—
What would thy trembling lips ?

Soph. Oh ! let me die.—
For such another storm, so much contempt
Thrown out on Carthage, so much praise on Rome,
Were worse than death. Why should I longer tire
My weary fate ? The most relentless Roman
What could he more ?

Mas. O Sophonisba, hear !
See me thy suppliant now. Talk not of death,
I have no life but thee.—Alas ! alas !
Hadst thou a little tenderness for me,
The smallest part of what I feel, thou wouldst—
(What wouldst thou not) forgive ? But how indeed,
How can I hope it ? Yet I from this moment
Will so devote my being to thy pleasure,
So live alone to gain thee, that thou must,
If there is human nature in thy breast,
Feel some relenting warmth.

Soph. Well, well, 'tis past :
To be inexorable suits not slaves.

Mas. Spare, spare that word ; it stabs me to
the soul ;

My crown, my life, and liberty are thine.

Oh ! give my passion way : my heart is full,
Oppress'd by love ; and I could number tears,
With all the dews that sprinkle o'er the morn.
Oh ! thou hast melted down my stubborn soul
To female tenderness.—Enough, enough,
Have we been cheated by the trick of state,
For Rome and Carthage suffer'd much too long ;
And, led by gaudy phantoms, wander'd far,
Far from our bliss. But now since met again,
Since here I hold thee, circle all perfection
In these bless'd arms ; since fate too presses hard,
Since Rome and slavery drive thee to the brink,
Let this immediate night exchange our vows,

Secure my bliss, our future fortunes blend ;
Set thee, the queen of beauty, on my throne,
And on these lovely brows, for empire form'd,
Place Afric's noblest crown.—A wretched gift,
To what my love would give.

Soph. What ? marry thee ?
This night ?

Mas. Thou dear one ! yes, this very night
Let injured Hymen have his rights restored,
And bind our broken vows.—Think, serious think
On what I plead.—A thousand reasons urge.—
Captivity dissolves thy former marriage ;
And if the meanest vulgar thus are freed,
Can Sophonisba, to a slave, to Syphax !
The most exalted of her sex, be bound ?
Besides it is the best, perhaps sole way,
To save thee from the Romans ; and must sure
Bar their pretensions : or if ruin comes,
To perish with thee is to perish happy.

Soph. Yet must I still insist—

Mas. It shall be so.
I know thy purpose ; it would plead for Syphax.
He shall have all, thou dearest ! shall have all,
Crowns, trifles, kingdoms, all again, but thee,
But thee, thou more than all ! *[Aside.]*

Soph. Bear witness, Heaven !
This is alone for Carthage. *[To him.]*

Gain'd by goodness,
I may be thine. Expect no love, no sighing.
Perhaps, hereafter, I may learn again
To hold thee dear. If on these terms thou canst,
Here take me, take me to thy wishes.

Mas. Yes,
Yes, Sophonisba ! as a wretch takes life
From off the rack.—All wild with frantic joy,
Thus hold thee, press thee to my bounding heart ;
And bless the bounteous gods.—Can Heaven give
more ?

Oh happy ! happy ! happy !—Come, my fair,
This ready minute sees thy will perform'd ;
From Syphax knocks his chains ; and I myself,
Even in his favour, will request the Romans.

Oh, thou hast smiled my passions into peace !—
So, while conflicting winds embroil'd the seas,
In perfect bloom, warm with immortal blood,
Young Venus rear'd her o'er the raging flood :
She smiled around, like thine her beauties glow'd ;
When smooth, in gentle swells, the surges flow'd ;
Sunk, by degress, into a liquid plain,
And one bright calm sat trembling on the main.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

SOPHONISBA, PHENISSA.

Phæn. Hail ! queen of Massylia once again,
And fair Massylia join'd. This rising day
Saw Sophonisba, from the height of life,
Thrown to the very brink of slavery ;
State, honours, armies vanish'd, nothing left
But her own great unconquerable mind.
And yet, ere evening comes, to larger power
Restored, I see my royal friend, and kneel
In grateful homage to the gods, and her.

Ye powers, what awful changes often mark
The fortunes of the great !

Soph. Phœnissa, true ;
'Tis awful all, the wondrous work of fate.
But, ah ! this sudden marriage damps my soul :
I like it not, that wild precipitance
Of youth, that ardour, that impetuous stream
In which his love return'd. At first, my friend,
He vainly rag'd with disappointed love ;
And, as the hasty storm subsided, then
To softness varied, to returning fondness,
To sighs, to tears, to supplicating vows.
But all his vows were idle, till at last
He shook my heart by Rome.—To be his queen
Could only save me from their horrid power.
And there is madness in that thought, enough

In that strong thought alone to make me run
From nature.

Phæn. Was it not auspicious, madam ;
Just as we hoped, just as our wishes plann'd ?—
Nor let your spirits sink : your serious hours,
When you behold the Roman ravage cheek'd,
From their enchantment Masinissa freed,
And Carthage mistress of the world again,
This marriage will approve : then will it rise
In all its glory, virtuous, wise, and great,
While happy nations, then deliver'd, join
Their loud acclaim. And, had the bless'd occasion
Neglected flown, where now had been your hopes,
Your liberty, your country, where your all ?
Think well of this ; you cannot but exult
In what is done.

Soph. So may my hopes succeed,
As love alone to Carthage, to the public,
Led me a marriage-victim to the temple,
And justifies my vows !—Ha ! Syphax here !—
What would his rage with me ?—Phœnissa, stay.—
But this one trial more.—Heroic truth,
Support me now !

SCENE II.

SYPHAX, SOPHONISBA, PHŒNISSA.

Syph. You seem to fly me, madam,
To shun my gratulations.—Here I come,
To join the general joy ; and I, sure I,
Who have to dotage, have to ruin loved you,
Must take a tender part in your success,
In your recover'd state.

Soph. 'Tis very well ;
I thank you, sir.

Syph. And gentle Masinissa,
Say, will he prove a very coming fool ;
All pliant, all devoted to your will ;
A duteous wretch like Syphax ?—Ha ! not moved !
Speak, thou perfidious ! canst thou bear it thus,
With such a steady countenance ? canst thou
Here see the man thou hast so grossly wrong'd,
And yet not sink in shame ? and yet not shake
In every guilty nerve ?

Soph. What have I done,
That I should tremble ? that I should not dare
To bear thy presence ?—Was my heart to blame,
I'd tremble at myself, and not at thee,
Proud man.—Nor would I live to be ashamed ;
For of all evils, to the generous, shame
Is the most deadly pang.—But you behold
My late engagement with a jealous, false,
And selfish eye.

Syph. Avenging Juno, hear !
And canst thou think to justify thyself ?—
I blush to hear thee, traitress !

Soph. O my soul !
Canst thou hear this, this base opprobrious language,
And yet be tamely calm ?—Well, for this once
It shall be so, in pity to thy madness.—
Impatient spirit, down !—Yes, Syphax, yes,
Yes, I will greatly justify myself :
Even by the consort of the thundering Jove,
Who binds the holy marriage-vow, be judged :
And every generous heart, not meanly lost
In little low pursuits, will sure absolve me.
But in the tempest of the soul, when rage,
Loud indignation, unattentive pride,

And jealousy confound it, how can then
The nobler public sentiments be heard ?—
Yet let me tell thee—

Syph. Thou canst tell me nought.
Away ! away ! nought but illusion, falsehood—

Soph. My heart will burst, in justice to myself,
If here I speak not : though thy rage, I know,
Can never be convinced, yet shall it be
Confounded.—What ! must I renounce my freedom ?
Forego the power of doing general good ?
Yield myself up the slave, the barbarous triumph,
Of insolent, enraged, inveterate Rome ?
And all for nothing but to grace thy fall ?
Nay, singly perish, to retain the name,
The empty title of a captive's wife ?—
For thee, the Romans may be mild to thee ;
But I, a Carthaginian, I, whose blood
Holds unrelenting enmity to theirs ;
Who have myself much hurt them, and who live
Only to work them woe ; what, what can I
Hope from their vengeance, but the very dregs
Of the worst fate, the bitterness of bondage ?
Yet thou, kind man, thou in thy generous love,
Wouldst have me suffer that ; be bound to thee,
For that dire end alone, beyond the stretch
Of nature and of law.

Syph. Confusion ! law !—
I know the laws permit thee ; the gross laws
That rule the vulgar.—I'm a captive ; true ;
And therefore mayst thou plead a shameful right
To leave me to my chains.—But say, thou base one !
Ungrateful, say, for whom am I a captive ?
For whom has battle after battle bled !
For whom my crown, my kingdom, and my all,
Been vilely cast away ?—For one, ye gods !
Who leaves me for the victor, for the foe
I hold in utter endless detestation.
Fire ! fury ! hell !—Oh, I am richly paid !
But this it is to love a woman—woman !
The source of all disaster, all perdition !—
Man in himself is social, would be happy,
Too happy, but the gods, to keep him wretched,
Cursed him with woman ! fond, enchanting, smooth,
And harmless-seeming woman ; but at heart
All poison, serpents, tigers, furies, all
That is destructive, in one breast combined,
And gilded o'er with beauty !

Soph. Hapless man !
I pity thee : this madness only stirs
My bosom to compassion, not to rage.—
Think as you list of our unhappy sex,
Too much subjected to your tyrant force :
Yet know that all, we were not all at least
Form'd for your trifles, for your wanton hours ;
Our passions too can sometimes soar above
The household task assign'd us, can extend
Beyond the narrow sphere of families,
And take great states into the expanded heart,
As well as yours, ye partial to yourselves !
And this is my support, my joy, my glory ;
On these great principles, and these alone,
I still direct my conduct.

Syph. False as hell !
I loath your sex when it pretends to virtue.
You talk of honour, conscience, patriotism !
A female patriot !—Vanity !—absurd !—
Even doating dull credulity would laugh
To hear you prate. Did ever woman yet
Form any better purpose in her thought,
Than how to please her pride or wanton will ?

Those are the principles on which you act ;
Yes, those alone.

Soph. Must I then, must I, Syphax,
Give thee a bitter proof of what I say ?
I would not seem to heighten thy distress,
Not in the least insult thee. Thou art fallen,
So fate severe has will'd it, fallen by me ;
I therefore have been patient : from another,
Such language, such indignity, had fired
My soul to madness. But since driven so far,
I must remind thy blind, injurious rage,
Of our unhappy marriage—

Syph. Darest thou name it,
After such perfidy ?

Soph. Allow me, Syphax—
Hear me but once ! If what I here declare
Shines not with reason, and the clearest truth,
May I be base, despised, and dumb for ever !
I pray thee think, when unpropitious Hymen
Our hands united, how I stood engaged.—
Was I not blooming in the pride of youth,
And youthful hopes ? sunk in a passion too
Which few resign ?—Yet then I married thee,
Because to Carthage deem'd a stronger friend :—
For that alone. On these conditions, say,
Didst thou not take me, court me to thy throne ?
Have I deceived thee since ? Have I dissembled ?
To gain one purpose, e'er pretended what
I never felt ?—Thou canst not say I have.
And if that principle, which then inspired
My marrying thee, was right, it cannot now
Be wrong : nay, since my native city wants
Assistance more, and sinking calls for aid,
'Tis still more right.

Syph. This reasoning is insult !
Soph. I'm sorry that thou dost oblige me to it :
Then, in a word, take my full-open'd soul :—
All love, but that of Carthage, I despise.
I formerly to Masinissa thee
Preferr'd not, nor to thee now Masinissa ;
But Carthage to you both. And if preferring
Thousands to one, a whole collected people,
All nature's tenderness, whate'er is sacred,
The liberty, the welfare of a state,
To one man's frantic happiness, be shame ;
Here, Syphax, I invoke it on my head !

This set aside ; I, careless of myself,
And scorning prosperous state, had still been thine ;
In all the depth of misery proudly thine.
But since the public good, the law supreme,
Forbids it ; I will leave thee with a kingdom,
The same I found thee, or not reign myself.

Alas ! I see thee hurt.—Why camest thou here,
Thus to inflame thee more ?

Syph. Why, sorceress ! why ?—
Thou complication of all deadly mischief !
Thou lying, soothing, specious, charming fury !
I'll tell thee why :—To breathe my great revenge,
To throw this load of burning madness from me—
To stab thee !—

Soph. Ha !—
Syph.—And, springing from thy heart,
To quench me with thy blood.

[PHENISSA interposes.

Soph. Off, give me way,
Phenissa ; tempt not thou his brutal rage.
Me, me, he dares not murder : if he dares,
Here let his fury strike ; for I dare die.—
What holds thy trembling hand ?

Phan. Guards !

Soph. Seize the king.
But look you treat him well, with all the state
His dignity demands.

Syph. That care from thee
Is worse than death.—The Roman trumpets!—Ha !
Now I bethink me, Rome will do me justice.
Yes, I shall see thee walk the slave of Rome ;
Forget my wrongs, and glut me with the sight.
Be that my best revenge.

Soph. Inhuman !—that,
If there is death in Afric, shall not be.

SCENE III.

LÆLIUS, SYPHAX.

Læl. Syphax !—alas ! how fallen ! how changed !
from what

I here beheld thee once in pomp and splendour,
At that illustrious interview, when Rome
And Carthage met beneath this very roof ;
Their two great generals, Asdrubal and Scipio,
To court thy friendship. Of the same repast
Both gracefully partook, and both reclined
On the same couch : for personal distaste
And hatred seldom burn between the brave.
Then the superior virtues of the Roman
Gain'd all thy heart. Even Asdrubal himself,
With admiration struck and just despair,
Own'd him as powerful at the social feast
As in the battle. This thou mayst remember ;
And how thy faith was given before the gods,
And sworn and seal'd to Scipio : yet how false
Thou since hast proved, I need not now recount :
But let thy sufferings for thy guilt atone,
The captive for the king. A Roman tongue
Scorns to pursue the triumph of the sword
With mean upbraidings.

Syph. Lælius, 'tis too true.
Curse on the cause !

Læl. But where is Masinissa ?
The brave young victor, the Numidian Roman,
Where is he ? that my joy, my glad applause,
From envy pure, may hail his happy state.—
Why that contemptuous smile ?

Syph. Too credulous Roman,
I smile to think how this brave Masinissa,
This Rome-devoted hero, must still more
Attract thy praises, by a late exploit ;
In every thing successful.

Læl. What is this—
These public shouts ? A strange unusual joy
O'er all the captive city blazes wide.
What wanton riot reigns to-night in Cirtha,
Within these conquer'd walls ?

Syph. This, Lælius, is
A night of triumph o'er my conqueror,
O'er Masinissa.

Læl. Masinissa !—How ?
Syph. Why, he to-night is married to my queen.

Læl. Impossible !—

Syph. Yes, she, the fury ! she,
Who put the nuptial torch into my hand,
That set my throne, my palace, and my kingdom,
All in a blaze ; she now has seized on him ;
Will turn him soon from Rome.—I know her power,
Her lips distil unconquerable poison.—
O glorious thought ! her arts, her fatal love

Will crush him deep, beneath the mighty ruins
Of falling Carthage.

Læl. Can it be?—Amazement!

Syph. Nay learn it from himself.—He comes.—

Awake,

Ye furies, snatch me from his sight!—For hell,
Its tortures all are gentle to the presence
Of a triumphant rival!

Læl. What is man!

SCENE IV.

MASINISSA, LÆLIUS.

Mas. Thou more than partner of this glorious day,
Which has from Carthage torn her chief support,
And tottering left her, I rejoice to see thee.—
To Cirtha welcome, Lælius. Thy brave legions
Now taste the sweet repose by valour purchased :
This city pours refreshment on their toils.—
I order'd Narva—

Læl. Thanks to Masinissa,
All that is well.—But I observed the king
More loosely guarded than befits the state
Of such a captive. True, indeed, from him
There is not much to fear. The dangerous spirit
Is his imperious queen, his Sophonisba :
The pride, the rage of Carthage, live in her.—
How? where is she?

Mas. She, Lælius!—in my care.
Think not of her. I'll answer for her conduct.

Læl. Yes, if in chains. Till then, believe me,
prince,

It were as safe to answer for the winds,
That their loosed fury will not rouse the waves ;
Or that the darted lightning will be harmless ;
As promise peace from her.—But why so dark ?—
You shift your place, your countenance grows warm :
It is not usual this in Masinissa.—
Pray, what offence can asking for the queen,
The Roman captive, give ?

Mas. Lælius, no more.—
You know my marriage.—Syphax has been busy.—
It is unkind to dally with my passion.

Læl. Ah, Masinissa ! was it then for this,
Thy hurry hither from the recent battle ?
Is the first instance of the Roman bounty
Thus, thus abused?—They give thee back thy
kingdom ;

And, in return are of their captive robb'd ;
Of all they valued—Sophonisba.—

Mas. Robb'd !—
How, Lælius, robb'd !

Læl. Yes, Masinissa, robb'd :
What is it else ?—But I, this very night,
Will here assert the majesty of Rome,
And (mark me!) tear her from the nuptial bed.

Mas. O gods ! O patience !—As soon, fiery
Roman,

As soon thy rage might from her azure sphere
Tear yonder moon.—The man who seizes her,
Shall set his foot first on my bleeding heart—
Of that be sure.—And is it thus you treat [you ?
Your firm allies?—Thus, kings in friendship with
Of human passions strip them?—Slaves indeed !
If thus denied the common privilege
Of nature, what the weakest creatures claim—
A right to what they love.

Læl.

Out ! out !—For shame !

This passion makes thee blind. Here is a war,
Which desolates the nations, has almost
Laid waste the world. How many widows, orphans,
And tender virgins weep its rage in Rome !
Even her great senate droops ; her nobles fail.
Nature herself, by frequent prodigies,
Seems at this havoc of her works to sicken :
And our Ausonian plains are now become
A horror to the sight : at each sad step,
Remembrance weeps.—Yet her, the greatest prize
It hitherto has yielded ; her, whose charms
Are only turn'd to whet its cruel point ;
Thou to thy wedded breast hast wildly taken,
Hast purchased thee her beauties by the blood
Of thy protecting friends ; and on a throne
Set her, this day recover'd by their arms.—
Canst thou do this, and call thyself a king
Allied to Rome ?—Rash youth, the Roman people,
To kings who dare offend them thus, vouchsafe not
The honour of their friendship.—Thou hast thrown
That glory from thee, and must now be taught
To dread their wrath.

Mas. Be not so haughty, Lælius.
It scarce becomes the gentle Scipio's friend ;
Suits not thy character, the tender manners
I still have mark'd in thee. I honour Rome :
But honour too myself, my vows, my queen :
Nor will, nor can I tamely hear thee threaten
To seize her like a slave.

Læl. I will be calm.
This thy rash deed, this unexpected shock,
Such a peculiar injury to me,
Thy friend and fellow-soldier, has perhaps
Snatch'd me too far. For hast thou not dishonour'd,
By this last action, a successful war,
Our common charge, trusted to us by Scipio ?

Mas. Our charge from Scipio was to conquer
Not by a barbarous triumph to insult [Syphax ;
His beauteous queen. Was Sophonisba made
To follow weeping a proud victor's chariot ?
She, the first mistress of my heart, who still
Reigns in my soul, and there will reign for ever.
At such a sight, the warrior's eye might wet
His burning cheek ; and all the Roman matrons,
Who lined the laurel'd way, ashamed and sad,
Turn from a captive brighter than themselves.—
But Scipio will be milder.

Læl. I disdain
This thy surmise, and give it up to Scipio.—
These passions are not comely.—Here to-morrow
Comes the proconsul. Meantime, Masinissa,
Ah ! harden not thyself in flattering hope.
Scipio is mild, but steady.—Ha ! the queen.—
I think she hates a Roman—and will leave thee.

SCENE V.

SOPHONISBA, MASINISSA.

Soph. Was not that Roman Lælius, as I enter'd,
Who parted gloomy hence ?

Mas. Madam, the same.

Soph. Unhappy Afric ! since these haughty
Romans

Have in this lordly manner trod thy courts.
I read his fresh reproaches in thy face ;
The lesson'd pupil in thy fallen look,
In that forced smile which sickens on thy cheek.

Mas. Oh, say not so, thou rapture of my soul !
For while I fondly gaze upon thy charms,
I smile as joyous as the sun in May ;
Nor can my heart, by thee possess'd, retain
One painful thought.

Soph. Nay, tell me, Masinissa,
How feels their tyranny when 'tis brought home ;
When, lawless grown, it touches what is dear ?—
Pomp for a while may dazzle thoughtless man,
False glory blind him ; but there is a time,
When even the slave in heart will spurn his chains,
Nor know submission more.—What said thy tyrant ?

Mas. His disappointment for a moment only
Burst in vain passion, and—

Soph. You stood abash'd ;
You bore his threats, and, tamely silent, heard him,
Heard the fierce Roman mark me for his triumph.
Oh ! meanness !

Mas. Banish that unkind suspicion.
The thought inflamed my soul. I vow'd my life,
My last Massylian to the sword, ere he
Should touch thy freedom with the least dishonour.
But that from Scipio—

Soph.

Scipio !

Mas. That from him—

Soph. I tell thee, Masinissa, if from him
You gain my freedom, from myself conceal it.
I shall disdain such freedom.

Mas. Sophonisba,
Thou all my heart holds precious, doubt no more.
Nor Rome, nor Scipio, nor a world combined,
Shall tear thee from me ; till outstretch'd I lie,
A nameless corpse.

Soph. If thy protection fails,
Of this at least be sure, be very sure,
To give me timely death.

Mas. Cease thus to talk,
Of death, of Romans, of unkind ambition :
My softer thoughts those rugged themes refuse,
And turn alone to love. All, all, but thee,
All nature is a passing dream to me.
Fix'd in my view, thou dost for ever shine,
Thy form forth-beaming from the soul divine.
A spirit thine, which mortals might adore ;
Despising love, and thence creating more.
Thou the high passions, I the tender prove,
Thy heart was form'd for glory, mine for love.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

MASINISSA, NARVA.

Mas. Hail to the joyous day ! With purple
clouds

The whole horizon glows. The breezy spring
Stands loosely floating on the mountain top,
And deals her sweets around. The sun too seems,
As conscious of my joy, with brighter beams
To gild the happy world ; and all things smile
Like Sophonisba. Love and friendship sure
Have mark'd this day with all their choicest
blessing ;

Oh ! Sophonisba's mine ! and Scipio comes !

Nar. My lord, the trumpets speak his near
approach.

Mas. I want his secret audience.—Leave us,
Narva.

SCENE II.

SCIPIO, MASINISSA.

Mas. Scipio ! more welcome than my tongue
can speak !

Oh, greatly, dearly welcome !

Scip. Masinissa !
My heart beats back thy joy.—A happy friend,
Raised by his prudence, fortitude, and valour,
O'er all his foes ; and on his native throne,
Amidst his rescued shouting subjects, set.
Say, can the gods in lavish bounty give
A sight more pleasing ?

Mas. My great friend and patron !
It was thy timely, thy restoring aid,
That brought me from the fearful desert-life,
To live again in state and purple splendour.
Thy friendship arm'd me with the strength of
Rome,

And now I wield the sceptre of my fathers.
See my dear people from the tyrant's scourge,
From Syphax freed ; I hear their glad applauses :
And, to complete my happiness, have gain'd
A friend worth all. O gratitude, esteem,
And love like mine, with what divine delight
Ye fill the heart !

Scip. Heroic youth ! thy virtue
Has earn'd whate'er thy fortune can bestow.
It was thy patience, Masinissa, patience,
A champion clad in steel, that in the waste
Attended still thy step, and saved my friend
For better days. What cannot patience do ?—
A great design is seldom snatch'd at once ;
'Tis patience heaves it on. From savage nature,
'Tis patience that has built up human life,
The nurse of arts ; and Rome exalts her head,
An everlasting monument of patience.

Mas. If I have that, or any virtue, Scipio,
'Tis copied all from thee.

Scip. No, Masinissa,
'Tis all unborrow'd, the spontaneous growth
Of nature in thy breast.—Friendship for once
Must, though thou blushest, wear a liberal tongue ;
Must tell thee, noble youth, that long experience
In councils, battles, many a hard event,
Has found thee still so constant, so sincere,
So wise, so brave, so generous, so humane,
So well attemper'd, and so fitly turn'd
For what is either great or good in life,
As casts distinguish'd honour on thy country,
And cannot but endear thee to the Romans.
For me, I think my labours all repaid,
My wars in Afric.—Masinissa's friendship
Rewards them all.—Be that my dearest triumph,
To have assisted thy forlorn estate,
And lent a happy hand in raising thee
To thy paternal throne, usurp'd by Syphax.
The greatest service could be done my country,

Distracted Afric, and mankind in general,
Was thus to aid thy worth. To put the power
Of sovereign rule into the good man's hand,
Is giving peace and happiness to millions.

But has my friend, since late we parted armies,
Since he with Lælius acted such a brave,
Auspicious part, against the common foe ;
Has he been blameless quite ? has he consider'd,
How pleasure often on the youthful heart,
Beneath the rosy soft disguise of love
(All sweetness, smiles, and seeming innocence)
Steals unperceived, and lays the victor low ?—
I would not, cannot put thee to the pain—
It pains me deeper—of the least reproach.—
Let thy too faithful memory supply
The rest. [Pausing.

Thy silence, that dejected look,
That honest colour flushing o'er thy cheek,
Impart thy better soul.

Mas. Oh, my good lord !
Oh, Scipio ! Love has seized me ; tyrant Love
Inthrals my soul.—I am undone by love.

Scip. And art thou then to ruin reconciled ?
Tamed to destruction ?—Wilt thou be undone ?
Resign the towering thought ? the vast design,
With future glories big ? the warrior's wreath ?
The praise of senates, an applauding world ?
All for a sigh ? all for a soft embrace ?
For a gay transient fancy, Masinissa ?—
For shame, my friend !—For honour's sake, for
virtue's,

Sit not with folded arms, despairing, weak,
Like a sick virgin sighing to the gale,
Till sure destruction comes.—Alas ! how changed
From him, the man I loved !

Mas. How changed indeed !—
The time has been, when, fired from Scipio's tongue,
My soul had mounted in a flame with his.—
Where is ambition flown ?—Hopeless attempt !—
Can love like mine be quell'd ? Can I forget
What still possesses, charms my thoughts for ever ?
Throw scornful from me what I hold most dear ?
Not feel the force of excellence ? to joy
Be dead ? and undelighted with delight ?—
Hold, let me think a moment.—No ! no ! no !
I am unequal to thy virtue, Scipio.

Scip. Fie, Masinissa, fie !—By heavens ! I blush
At thy dejection, this degenerate language.
What ! perish for a woman ! ruin all,
All the fair deeds which an admiring world
Hopes from thy ripper years ; only to soothe
A stubborn fancy, a luxurious will ?

How must it, think you, sound in future story !—
Young Masinissa was a virtuous prince,
And Afric smiled beneath his early ray ;
But that a Carthaginian captive came,
By whom untimely in the common fate
Of love he fell.—The wise will scorn the page ;
And all thy praise be some fond maid exclaiming,
Where are those lovers now ?—O rather, rather
Had I ne'er seen the vital light of heaven,
Than like the vulgar live, and like them die !—
Ambition sickens at the very thought.—
To puff and bustle here from day to day,
Lost in the passions of inglorious life,
Joys which the careless brutes possess above us ;
And when some years, each duller than another,
Are thus elapsed, in nauseous pangs to die ;
And pass away, like those forgotten things
That soon become as they had never been.

Mas. And am I dead to this !

Scip. The gods, my friend,
Who train up heroes in misfortune's school,
Have shook thee with adversity ; with each
Illustrious evil that can raise, expand,
And fortify the mind. Thy rooted worth
Has stood these wintry blasts, grown stronger by
them.

Shall then, in prosperous times, while all is mild,
All vernal fair, and glory blows around thee ;
Shall then the dead serene of pleasure come,
And lay thy faded honours in the dust ?

Mas. O, gentle Scipio ! spare me, spare my
weakness.

Scip. Remember Hannibal.—A signal proof,
A fresh example of destructive pleasure.
He was the dread of nations, once of Rome :
When from Bellona's bosom, nursed in camps,
And hard with toil, he down the rugged Alps
Rush'd like a torrent over Italy ;
Unconquer'd, till the loose delights of Capua
Sunk his victorious arm, his genius broke,
Perfumed, and made a lover of the hero.
Lo ! now he droops in Bruttium, fear'd no more.—
Remember him ; and yet resume thy spirit,
Ere it be quite dissolved.

Mas. Shall Scipio stoop
Thus to regard, to teach me wisdom thus,
And yet a stupid anguish at my heart
Repel what'er he says ?—But why, my friend,
Why should we kill the best of passions, love ?
It aids the hero, bids ambition rise
To nobler heights, inspires immortal deeds,
Even softens brutes, and adds a grace to virtue.

Scip. There is a holy tenderness indeed,
A virtuous, social, sympathetic love,
That binds, supports, and sweetens human life.
But is thy passion such ?—List, Masinissa,
While I the hardest office of a friend
Discharge ; and, with a necessary hand,
A hand, though harsh at present, truly tender,
I paint this passion : and if then thou still
Art bent to soothe it, I must sighing leave thee,
To what the gods think fit.

Mas. O never, Scipio,
O never leave me to myself !—Speak on :
I dread, and yet desire thy friendly hand.

Scip. I hope that Masinissa needs not now
Be told, how much his happiness is mine ;
With what a warm benevolence I'd spring
To raise, confirm it, to prevent his wishes
In every right pursuit.—But while he rages,
Burns in a fever, shall I let him quaff
Delicious poison for a cooling draught,
In foolish pity to his thirst ? shall I
Let a swift flame consume him as he sleeps,
Because his dreams are gay ? shall I indulge
A frenzy flash'd from an infectious eye,
A sudden impulse unapproved by reason ?
Nay, by thy cool deliberate thought condemn'd,
Resolved against ?—A passion for a woman,
Who has abused thee basely ? left thy youth,
Thy love as sweet, as tender as the spring,
The blooming hero for the hoary tyrant ?
And now, who makes thy sheltering arms alone
Her last retreat, to save her from the vengeance
Which even her very perfidy to thee
Has brought upon her head ?—Nor is this all :—
A woman who will ply her deepest arts
(Ah ! too prevailing, as appears already)

Will never rest till Syphax' fate is thine ;
Till friendship weeping flies, we join no more
In glorious deeds, and thou fall off from Rome ?
I could add too, that there is something cruel,
Inhuman in thy passion. Does not Syphax,
While thou rejoicest, die ? The generous heart
Should scorn a pleasure which gives others pain.—
If this, my friend, all this consider'd deep,
Alarm thee not, nor rouse thy resolution,
And call the hero from his wanton slumber,
Then Masinissa's lost.

Mas. Oh, I am pierced !
In every thought am pierced !—'Tis all too true.—
I would, but can't deny it.—Whither, whither,
Through what enchanted wilds have I been
wandering ?

They seem'd Elysium, the delightful plains,
The happy groves of heroes and of lovers ;
But the divinity that breathes in thee
Has broke the charm, and I am in a desert,
Far from the land of peace. It was but lately
That a pure joyous calm o'erspread my soul,
And reason tuned my passions into bliss ;
When love came hurrying in, and with rash hand
Mix'd them delirious, till they now ferment
To misery.—There is no reasoning down
This deep, deep anguish ! this continual pang !—
A thousand things, when'er my raptur'd thought
Runs back a little—But I will not think.—
And yet I must.—Oh gods ! that I could lose
What a few hours have on my memory graved
In adamant !

Scip. But one strong effort more,
And the fair field is thine—A conquest far
Excelling that o'er Syphax. What remains,
Since now thy madness to thyself appears,
But an immediate manly resolution,
To shake off this effeminate disease ;
These soft ideas which seduce thy soul,
Make it all idle, weak, inglorious, wild,
A scene of dreams ; to give them to the winds,
And be my former friend, thyself again ?—
I joy to find thee touch'd by generous motives,
And that I need not bid thee recollect
Whose awful property thou hast usurp'd ;
Need not assure thee, that the Roman people,
The senators of Rome, will never suffer
A dangerous woman, their devoted foe,
A woman, whose irrefragable spirit
Has in great part sustain'd this bloody war,
Whose charms corrupted Syphax from their side,
To ruin thee too, taint thy faithful breast,
And kindle future war. No, fate itself
Is not more steady to the right than they.
And where the public good but seems concern'd,
No motive their impenetrable hearts,
Nor fear nor tenderness, can touch : such is
The spirit that has rais'd imperial Rome.

Mas. Ah, killing truth !—But I have promised,
Scipio,
Have sworn to save her from the Roman power :
My plighted faith is pass'd, my hand is given ;
And, by the conscious gods ! who mark'd my
vows,
The whole united world shall never have her.
For I will die a thousand thousand deaths,
With all Massylia in one field expire ;
Ere to the lowest wretch, much less to her
I love, to Sophonisba, to my queen,
I violate my word.

Scip. My heart approves
Thy resolution, thy determined honour.
For ever sacred be thy word, and oath.
But, thus divided, how to keep thy faith
At once to Rome and Sophonisba ; how
To save her from our chains, and yet thyself
From greater bondage ; this thy secret thought
Can best inform thee.

Mas. Agony ! distraction !—
These wilful tears !—O look not on me, *Scipio,*
For I'm a child again.

Scip. Thy tears are no reproach.
Tears oft look graceful on the manly cheek.
The cruel cannot weep. Lo ! friendship's eye
Gives thee the drop it would refuse itself.
I know 'tis hard, wounds every bleeding nerve
About thy heart, thus to tear off thy passion ;
But for that very reason, *Masinissa,*
'Tis hoped from thee. The harder, thence results
The greater glory.—Why should we pretend
To conquer nations, and to rule mankind,
Pre-eminent in glory, place, and power,
While slaves at heart ? while by fantastic turns
Our frantic passions reign ?—This very thought
Should turn our pomp to shame, disgrace our
triumphs ;

And, when the shouts of millions rend our ears,
Whisper reproach.—O ye celestial powers !
What is it, in a torrent of success,
To overflow the world ; if by the stream
Our own enfeebled minds are borne away
From reason and from virtue ? Real glory
Springs from the silent conquest of ourselves ;
And without that the conqueror is nought
But the first slave.—Then rouse thee, *Masinissa !*
Nor in one weakness all thy virtues lose ;
And, oh ! beware of long, of vain repentance.

Mas. Well ! well ! no more.—It is but dying
too.

SCENE III.

Scip. (alone.) I wish I have not urg'd the truth
to rigour !
There is a time when virtue grows severe,
Too much for nature, and almost even cruel.

SCENE IV.

SCIPIO, LÆLIUS.

Scip. Poor *Masinissa*, *Lælius*, is undone ;
Betwixt his passion and his reason tost
In miserable conflict.

Læl. Entering, *Scipio*,
He shot athwart me, nor vouchsafed one look.
Hung on his clouded brow, I mark'd despair,
And his eye glaring with some dire resolve.
Fast o'er his cheek too ran the hasty tear.—
It were great pity that he should be lost.

Scip. By heavens ! to lose him were a shock,
as if
I lost thee, *Lælius*, lost my dearest brother.
Bound up in friendship from our infant years,
A thousand lovely qualities endear him ;
Only too warm of heart.

Læl. What shall be done ?
Scip. Here let it rest, till time abates his passion.

Nature is nature, Lælius, let the wise
Say what they please. But now perhaps he dies.—
Haste ! haste ! and give him hope—I have not
time

To tell thee what.—Thy prudence will direct.—
Whatever is consistent with my honour,
My duty to the public, and my friendship
To him himself, say, promise shall be done.
I hope returning reason will prevent
Our farther care.

Læli. I fly with joy.

Scip.

His life

Not only save, but Sophonisba's too ;
For both I fear are in this passion mixt.

Læli. It shall be done.

SCENE V.

Scip. (alone.) If friendship suffers thus ;
When love pours in his added violence,
What are the pangs which Masinissa feels !

SCENE VI.

SOPHONISBA, PHENISSA.

Soph. Yes, Masinissa loves me—Heavens ! how
fond !

But yet I know not what hangs on my spirit,
A dismal boding : for this fatal Scipio,
I dread his virtues : this prevailing Roman
Even now perhaps deludes the generous king,
Fires his ambition with mistaken glory ;
Demands me from him : for full well he knows,
That while I live I must intend their ruin.

Phæn. Madam, these fears—

Soph. And yet it cannot be.

Can Scipio, whom even hostile fame proclaims
Of perfect honour, and of polish'd manners,
Smooth, artful, winning, moderate, and wise,
Make such a wild demand !—Or, if he could,
Can Masinissa grant it ? give his queen,
Whom love and honour bind him to protect,
Yield her a captive to triumphant Rome ?—
'Tis baseness to suspect it ; 'tis inhuman.—
What then remains ?—Suppose they should resolve
By right of war to seize me for their prize—
Ay, there it kills !—What can his single arm
Against the Roman power ? that very power
By which he stands restored ?—Distracting thought !
Still o'er my head the rod of bondage hangs.
Shame on my weakness !—This poor catching hope,
This transient taste of joy, will only more
Imbitter death.

Phæn. A moment will decide.

Madam, till then—

Soph. Would I had died before !—
And am I dreaming here ? Here ! from the Romans
Beseeching I may live to swell their triumph ?
When my free spirit should ere now have join'd
That great assembly, those devoted shades,
Who scorn'd to live till liberty was lost,
But, ere their country fell, abhor'd the light.—
Whence this pale slave ?—he trembles with his
message.

SCENE VII.

SOPHONISBA, PHENISSA ; and to them a Slave, with a letter
and poison from MASINISSA.

Slave (kneeling). This, madam, from the king,
and this.

Soph. Ha !—Stay.— [*Reads the letter.*
Rejoice, Phenissa ! Give me joy, my friend !
For here is liberty ! my fears are vain :
The hand of Rome can never touch me more.
Hail ! perfect freedom, hail !

Phæn. How ? what ? my queen !—
Ah ! what is this ? [*Pointing to the poison.*

Soph. The first of blessings—death.

Phæn. Alas ! alas ! can I rejoice in that ?

Soph. Shift not thy colour at the sound of death ;
For death appears not in a dreary light,
Seems not a blank to me, a loss of all
Those fond sensations, those enchanting dreams,
Which cheat a toiling world from day to day,
And form the whole of happiness they know.
It is to me perfection, glory, triumph.
Nay, fondly would I chuse it, though persuaded
It were a long dark night without a morning :
To bondage far prefer it, since it is
Deliverance from a world where Romans rule,
Where violence prevails.—And timely too,
Before my country falls ; before I feel
As many stripes, as many chains, and deaths,
As there are lives in Carthage.—Glorious charter !
By which I hold immortal life and freedom,
Come, let me read thee once again ; and then,
Obey the mandate. [*Reads the letter aloud.*

“MASINISSA to his QUEEN.

“The gods know with what pleasure I would
have kept my faith to Sophonisba in another
manner.—But since this fatal bowl alone can
deliver thee from the Romans ; call to mind thy
father, thy country, that thou hast been the wife
of two kings ; and act up to the dictates of thy
own heart. I will not long survive thee.”

Oh, 'tis wondrous well !

Ye gods of death who rule the Stygian gloom !
Ye who have greatly died ! I come ! I come !
I die contented, since I die a queen,
By Rome untouch'd, unsullied by their power ;
So much their terror that I must not live.—
And thou, go tell the king, if this is all
The nuptial present he can send his bride,
I thank him for it ; but that death had worn
An easier face, before I trusted him.—
Add, hither had he come, I could have taught
Him how to die.—I linger not, remember ;
I stand not shivering on the brink of life ;
And, but these votive drops, which grateful thus

To Jove the high deliverer I shed,
Assure him that I drank it, drank it all,
With an unalter'd smile.—Away. [*Drinks.*

SCENE VIII.

SOPHONISBA, PHENISSA.

Soph. My friend !
In tears, my friend !—Dishonour not my death
With womanish complaints. Weep not for me ;
Weep for thyself, Phenissa, for thy country,

But not for me. There is a certain hour,
Which one would wish all undisturb'd and bright,
No care, no sorrow, no dejected passions ;
And that is when we die, when hence we go,
Ne'er to be seen again ; then let us spread
A bold exalted wing, and the last voice
We hear, be that of wonder and applause.

Phen. Who with such virtue wishes not to die ?

Soph. And is the sacred moment then so near ?
The moment, when yon sun, those heavens, this
earth,

Hateful to me, polluted by the Romans,
And all the busy slavish race of men,
Shall sink at once ; and straight another state,
New scenes, new joys, new faculties, new wonders,
Rise on a sudden round : but this the gods
In clouds and horror wrap, or none would live.—
Oh ! to be there.—My breast begins to burn ;
My tainted heart grows sick.—Ah me ! Phœnissa !
How many virgins, infants, tender wretches !
Must feel these pangs, ere Carthage is no more.—
Soft, lead me to my couch.—My shivering limbs,
Do this last office, and then rest for ever.—
I pray thee weep not, pierce me not with groans.—
The king too here !—Nay then my death is full.

SCENE IX.

SOPHONISBA, PHŒNISSA, MASINISSA, LÆLIUS, NARVA.

Mas. Has Sophonisba drank this cursed bowl ?—
Oh, horror ! horror ! what a sight is here !

Soph. Had I not drank it, Masinissa, then
I had deserved it.

Mas. Exquisite distress !
Oh, bitter, bitter fate ! and this last hope
Completes my woe.

Soph. When will these ears be deaf
To misery's complaint ? These eyes be blind
To mischief wrought by Rome ?

Mas. Too soon ! too soon !
Ah ! why so hasty ? But a little while
Hadst thou delay'd this horrid draught, I then
Had been as happy as I now am wretched.

Soph. What means this talk of hope ? of coward
waiting ?

Mas. What have I done ? O heavens ! I
cannot think
On my rash deed !—But while I talk, she dies !—
And how ? what ? where am I then ?—Say, canst
Forgive me, Sophonisba ? [thou

Soph. Yes, and more,
More than forgive thee, thank thee, Masinissa.—
Hadst thou been weak, and dallied with my freedom
Till by proud Rome enslaved, that injury
I never had forgiven.

Mas. I came with life.

Lælius and I from Scipio hasted hither ;
But death was here before us—this vile poison !

Soph. With life !—There was some merit in
the poison ;

But this destroys it all.—And couldst thou think
Me mean enough to take it ?—Oh ! Phœnissa !
This mortal toil is almost at an end.—
Receive my parting soul.

Phæn. Alas, my queen !

Mas. Dies ! dies ! and scorns me ! Mercy,
Sophonisba !

Grant one forgiving look, while yet thou canst ;
Or death itself, the grave cannot relieve me :
But with the furies join'd, my frantic ghost
Will howl for ever.—Quivering ! and pale !—
Have I done this !

Soph. But for Rome,
We might have been most happy.—I conjure thee,
Be mild to Syphax ; for my sake regard him,
And let thy rage against him die with me.—
Farewell !—'Tis done !—O never, never, Carthage,
Shall I behold thee more. [Dies.

Mas. Dead ! dead !—oh ! dead.—
Is there no death for me ?

[Snatches Lælius' sword to stab himself.

Læl. Hold, Masinissa !

Mas. And wouldst thou make a coward of me,
Lælius ?

Have me survive that murder'd excellence ?—
Did she not stir ?—Ha ! who has shock'd my brain ?
It whirls, it blazes !—Was it thou, old man ?

Nar. Alas ! alas !—good Masinissa, softly !—
Let me conduct thee to thy couch.

Mas. The grave
Shall be my couch.—Ye cannot make me live ;
Ye strive in vain.—Off !—crowd not thus around
me :

For I will hear, see, think no more !—Thou sun,
Withhold thy hated beams ! And all I want
Of thee, kind earth, is an immediate grave !—
Ay, there she lies !—Why to that pallid sweetness
Cannot I, Nature, lay my lips, and die !

[Throws himself beside her.

Læl. See there the ruins of the noble mind,
When, from calm reason, passion tears the sway.—
What pity she should perish !—Cruel war,
'Tis not the least misfortune in thy train,
That oft by thee the brave destroy the brave.—
She had a Roman soul ; for every one
Who loves, like her, his country, is a Roman :
Whether on Afric's sandy plains he glows,
Or lives untamed among Riphean snows,
If generous liberty the breast inflame,
The gloomy Libyan then deserves that name ;
And, warm with freedom, under frozen skies,
In farthest Britain, Romans yet may rise.

A NUPTIAL SONG,

INTENDED TO HAVE BEEN INSERTED IN THE FOURTH ACT.

COME, gentle Venus ! and assuage
 A warring world, a bleeding age :
 For nature lives beneath thy ray,
 The wintry tempests haste away,
 A lucid calm invests the sea,
 Thy native deep is full of thee :
 The flowering earth, where'er you fly,
 Is all o'er spring, all sun the sky ;
 A genial spirit warms the breeze ;
 Unseen among the blooming trees,
 The feather'd lovers tune their throat ;
 The desert growls a soften'd note ;
 Glad o'er the meads the cattle bound,
 And love and harmony go round.

But chief into the human heart
 You strike the dear delicious dart ;
 You teach us pleasing pangs to know,
 To languish in luxurious woe,
 To feel the generous passions rise,
 Grow good by gazing, mild by sighs ;
 Each happy moment to improve,
 And fill the perfect year with love.

Come, thou delight of heaven and earth !
 To whom all creatures owe their birth ;
 Oh ! come, sweet-smiling, tender, come,
 And yet prevent our final doom.
 For long the furious god of war
 Has crush'd us with his iron car ;
 Has rag'd along our ruin'd plains,
 Has soil'd them with his cruel stains ;
 Has sunk our youth in endless sleep,
 And made the widow'd virgin weep :
 Now let him feel thy wonted charms ;
 Oh ! take him to thy twining arms ;
 And, while thy bosom heaves on his,
 While deep he prints the humid kiss,
 Ah ! then his stormy heart control,
 And sigh thyself into his soul.

EDWARD AND ELEONORA.

A Tragedy.

TO

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCESS OF WALES.

MADAM,

If I take the liberty once more to crave the protection of your Royal Highness for another Tragedy of my writing, it is because I am led almost unavoidably to it by my subject. In the character of *Eleonora* I have endeavoured to represent, however faintly, a princess distinguished for all the virtues that render greatness amiable. I have aimed particularly to do justice to her inviolable affection and generous tenderness for a prince who was the darling of a great and free people.

Their descendants, even now, will own with pleasure how properly this address is made to your Royal Highness. I am, with the profoundest respect, Madam,

Your Royal Highness's most humble and most devoted servant,

JAMES THOMSON.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

EDWARD, *Prince of England.*

EARL OF GLOSTER.

THEALD, *Archdeacon of Liege.*

SELIM, *Sultan of Jaffa.*

ELEONORA, *Princess of England.*

DARAXA, *an Arabian Princess.*

Assassin, Officers, &c.

SCENE.—EDWARD'S Tent in the Camp before Jaffa, a City on the Coast of Palestine.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Prince EDWARD, THEALD, Earl of GLOSTER.

Edw. I will no longer doubt. 'Tis plain, my friends,

That with our little band of English troops,
By all allies, all western powers deserted,
All but the noble knights that guard this land,
The flower of Europe and of Christian valour,
Nought can be done, nought worthy of our cause,
Worthy of England's heir, and of the name
Of Lion-hearted Richard ; whose renown,
After almost a century elapsed,
Shakes through its wide extent this eastern world.
What else could bend the Saracen to peace,
Who might, with better policy, refuse
To grant it us ?—Yes, to the prince of Jaffa
I will accord the peace he has demanded :
And though my troops, impatient, wait the signal

To storm yon walls, yet will I not expose,
In vain attempts, valour that should be saved
For better days, and for the public welfare.
Rash fruitless war, from wanton glory waged,
Is only splendid murder.—What says Theald ?
Approves my reverend father of my purpose ?

The. Edward, illustrious heir of England's crown,

I must indeed be blinded with the zeal
Of this our holy cause, to think your arms,
Thus all-forsaken, thus betray'd, sufficient
To reach the grandeur of your first design,
And, from the yoke of infidels, to free
The sacred city, object of our vows ;
Yet this, methinks, this Jaffa might be seized :
That still were something, an auspicious omen
Of future conquest.—But, unskill'd in war,
To you, my lord, and Gloster's wise experience,
I this submit.

Edw. Speak, Gloster, your advice,
Before I fix my latest resolution.

Glo. You know, my lord, I never was a friend
To this crusado. My unchanged advice
Is strenuous still for peace. Nor this I urge,
From our deserted arms, and cause betray'd,
But from the state of our unhappy country.
Behold her, Edward, with a filial eye,
And say, is this a time for these adventures ?
Behold her then with deep commotion shook,
Beneath a false delusive face of quiet :
Behold her bleeding yet from civil war,
Exhausted, sunk ; drain'd by ten thousand arts
Of lawless imposition, priestly fraud,
Italian leeches, and insatiate Rome ;
That never raged before with such gross insult,
With such abandon'd avarice. Besides,
Who knows what evil counsellors, again,
Are gather'd round the throne ?—In times like
these,

Disturb'd, and lowering with unsettled freedom,
One step to lawless power, one bold attempt
Renew'd, the least infringement of our charters,
Would in the giddy nation raise a tempest.—
Return, my prince. You have already saved
Your father from his foes, from haughty Leicester :
Now save him from his ministers, from those
Who hold him captive in the worst of chains.

Edw. You, Gloster, saved us both.

Glo. I did my duty ;
Even while I join'd with Leicester, did my duty—
I hope I did—He, who contends for freedom,
Can ne'er be justly deem'd his sovereign's foe :
No, 'tis the wretch that tempts him to subvert it,
The soothing slave, the traitor in the bosom,
Who best deserves that name ; he is a worm
That eats out all the happiness of kingdoms.—

Edward, return ; lose not a day, an hour,
Before this city. Though your cause be holy,
Believe me, 'tis a much more pious office,
To save your father's old and broken years,
His mild and easy temper, from the snares
Of low, corrupt, insinuating traitors :
A nobler office far ! on the firm base
Of well-proportion'd liberty, to build
The common quiet, happiness, and glory
Of king and people, England's rising grandeur.
To you, my prince, this task, of right, belongs.
Has not the royal heir a juster claim
To share his father's inmost heart and counsels,
Than aliens to his interest, those who make
A property, a market of his honour ?—

One reason more allow me to suggest
For peace, immediate peace :—should blind mis-
fortune,
In this far-distant hostile land, oppress us ;
A chance to which our weakness stands exposed ;
What, Edward, of thy princess would become,
Thy Eleonora ; she, whose tender love,
Through stormy seas and in fierce camps, attends
thice ?

What of thy blooming offspring ?—Charged with
these,

To give our courage scope were cruel rashness.
Edw. Enough, my lord, I stand resolved on
peace :

And will to England straight.—But where, alas !
Where shall we cover our inglorious heads ;
When gay with hope the people round us press,
To hear by what exploits we have sustain'd

The fame of Richard, and of English valour ?—
Shall I, my generous country, I be rank'd
With those weak princes, who consume thy wealth,
And sink thy name in idle expeditions ?—
Perfidious France !—Be this the ruling point
Of my whole life and passion of my soul,
To humble thee, proud nation !—Meantime,
Gloster,

See that the captive princess be restored,
Daraxa, to the sultan of this city,
Whose bride she is : we wage not war with women.

SCENE II.

EDWARD, THEALD, GLOSTER, *an Officer belonging to the Prince.*

Officer. One from the prince of Jaffa, sir,
demands

Your secret ear on some important message.

Edw. Conduct him to my tent.—

[*Officer goes out.*

He brings, I judge,

The sultan's last instructions for this peace.

Here wait : I may your faithful counsel want.

SCENE III.

THEALD, GLOSTER.

The. Whatever woes, of late, have clouded
England ;

Yet must I, Gloster, call that nation happy,
On whose horizon smiles a dawning prince
Of Edward's worth and virtues.

Glo. True, my friend ;

Edward has great, has amiable virtues ;
That virtue chiefly which befits a prince—
He loves the people he must one day rule ;
With fondness loves them, with a noble pride ;
Esteems their good, esteems their glory his.
One instance it becomes me to recount,
That shows the genuine greatness of his soul.
Though I have met him in the bloody field,
He fighting for his father, I for freedom ;
Yet bears his bosom no remaining grudge
Of those distracted times : to me his heart
Is greatly reconciled.—Virtue ! beyond
The little unforgiving soul of tyrants !

Now will I tell thee, Theald, whence I stoop
To wear the gaudy chains of court-attendance,
At these grey years, that should in calm retire-
Pass the soft evening of a bustling life, [ment
And plume my parting soul for better worlds.
Amidst his many virtues, youthful Edward
Is lofty, warm, and absolute of temper :
I therefore seek to moderate his heat,
To guide his fiery virtues, that, misled
By dazzling power and flattering sycophants,
Might finish what his father's weaker measures
Have tried in vain. And hence I here attend him,
In expeditions which I ne'er approved,
In holy wars—your pardon, reverend father—
I must declare I think such wars the fruit
Of idle courage, or mistaken zeal,
Sometimes of rapine and religious rage,
To every mischief prompt.

The. You wrong, my lord,
You wrong them much. To set this matter only

Upon a civil footing : say, what right
Had robbers rushing from Arabian deserts,
Fierce as the suns that kindled up their rage,
Thus, in a barbarous torrent, to bear down
All Asia, Afric, and profane their altars ?—
And to repel brute force by force is just.
Nay, does not even our duty, interest, glory,
The common honour of the Christian name,
Require us to repress their wild ambition,
That labours westward still, and threatens Europe ?

Glo. Yes, when they burst their limits, let us
check them :

And with a firmer hand than those loose Christians,
The most corrupt and abject of mankind,
Slaves, doubly slaves, who suffer'd these Arabians,
In virtue their superiors as in valour,
Without resistance to o'er-run the world.

By rage and zeal, 'tis true, their empire rose :
But now some settled ages of possession
Create a right, than which, I fear, few nations
Can show a better. Sure I am 'tis madness,
Inhuman madness, thus, from half the world,

To drain its blood and treasure ; to neglect
Each art of peace, each care of government !
And all for what ?—By spreading desolation,
Rapine and slaughter o'er the other half,

To gain a conquest we can never hold.—
I venerate this land. Those sacred hills,
Those vales, those cities, trod by saints and prophets,
By God himself ! the scenes of heavenly wonders,

Inspire me with a certain awful joy.
But the same God, my friend, pervades, sustains,
Surrounds and fills this universal frame ;

And every land where spreads his vital presence,
His all-enlivening breath, to me is holy.—
Excuse me, Theald, if I go too far :

I meant alone to say, I think these wars
A kind of persecution. And when that,
That most absurd and cruel of all vices,
Is once begun, where shall it find an end ?
Each in his turn, or has or claims a right
To wield its dagger, to return its furies ;
And, first or last, they fall upon ourselves.

Edw. (*behind the scenes*). Inhuman villain ! is
thy message murder ?

The. Ha ! heard you not the prince exclaiming
murder ?

Glo. Should this barbarian messenger—

[*Moving towards the noise.*

'Tis so !

SCENE IV.

THEALD, GLOSTER ; to them Prince EDWARD, wounded in
the arm, and dragging in the assassin.

Edw. Detested wretch ! and does the prince of
Jaffa

Send base assassins to transact his treaties ?
There—take thy answer, ruffian !—

[*Stabs him with the dagger he had wrested from him.*

Blow too hasty !

I should have saved thee for a fitter death.

Ass. I would have triumph'd, Christian, in thy
rage.

For know, thou vile destroyer of the faithful !
That though my erring dagger miss'd thy heart,
Yet has it fired thy veins with mortal poison,

Whose very touch is death.—Allah be praised !
O glorious fate ! Prophet, receive my soul ! [*Dies.*

Edw. (*after a short pause*). Why gaze you with
amazement on each other ?

Are we not men, to whom the various chances
Of life are known ?

Glo. Ha ! poison did he say ?

Then is at once my prince and country lost !—
O fatal wound to England !

The. Quick, my lord,

Retire and have it drest without delay,
Ere the fell poison can diffuse its rage,
And deeply taint your blood.

Edw. The princess comes !

O save me from her tenderness !

SCENE V.

EDWARD, THEALD, GLOSTER ; to them the Princess
ELEONORA.

Ele. My Edward !

Support me !—Oh !

Edw. She faints—My Eleonora !

Look up, and bless me with thy gentle eyes !—
The colour comes, her cheeks resume their beauty,
And all her charms revive.—Hence spurn that
carcase ;

A sight too shocking for my Eleonora.

Ele. And lives my Edward, lives my dearest lord,
From this assassin saved ?—Alas ! you bleed !

Edw. 'Tis nought, my lovely princess—A slight
wound.

Ele. But, ah ! methought, I entering heard of
poison

Tainting the blood.—What ! was the dagger
poison'd ?—

Ha ! silent all ? will none relieve my fears ?—

Glo. Madam, restrain your tenderness a moment—

The prince delays too long—Let him retire.

Meanwhile, the troubled camp shall be my care ;
Lest the base foe should make a sudden sally,

While yet our troops are stunn'd with this disaster.

Edw. I thank thee, noble Gloster.—Nor alone
Support my troops ; go, rouse them to revenge ;
Tell them their injured prince will try their love,
Their valour soon.—And you, my friend, good

Theald,

Attend the princess.—Cheer thee, Eleonora !

I cannot, will not, leave thee long, to vex

Thy tender soul with aggravated fears.

The. Behold Daraxa, the false sultan's bride.

SCENE VI.

ELEONORA, THEALD, DARAXA.

Dar. Princess of England, let me share thy grief.
Whence flow these tears ? and what this wild alarm,
This noise of murder and assassination ?

Ele. Alas ! the prince is wounded by a ruffian ;
And with a poison'd dagger, as I fear,

Yet none will ease me of this racking thought.—

Nay, tell me, Theald, since to know the worst

Is oft a kind of miserable comfort,

What has befallen the prince ? For this slight wound
Could never thus o'ercast the brave with terror.

The. I dare not, princess, dally with your fate.
An impious villain, from the sultan Selim,
Pretended to the prince a secret message
About the peace in treaty. Dreading nought,
He left us here, and to his tent retired,
There to receive this execrable envoy.
Straight with the prince alone, the fierce assassin
Attempted on his life; but in his arm
He took, it seems, the blow, and from the villain
Wresting the dagger, plunged it to his heart.
This last we saw; and heard the inhuman bigot,
Who deem'd himself a martyr in their cause,
Boast, as he died, the prince's wound was poison'd.
Ele. Then all I fear'd is true! then am I wretched
Beyond even hope!

Dar. A villain from the sultan!—
Ele. Ah the distracting thought! And is my life!
My love! my Edward! on the brink of fate!
Of fate that may this moment snatch him from me!

Dar. What! Selim send assassins? and beneath
A name so sacred? Selim, whose renown
Is incense breathing o'er the sweeten'd east;
For each humane, each generous virtue famed;
Selim! the rock of faith! and sun of honour!

Ele. O complicated woe! The Christian cause
Has now no more a patron and restorer;
England no more a prince, in whom she placed
Her glory, her delight, her only hope;
These desolated troops no more a chief;
No more a husband, a protector, I,
A friend, a lover! and my helpless children
No more a father!

Dar. Pardon, gentle princess,
If in this whirlwind of revolving passions,
That snatch my soul by turns, I have forgot
To pay the tribute which I owe thy sorrows—
But I myself, alas! am more unhappy!

Ele. What woes can equal mine? who lose, thus
vilely,

The best! the bravest! loveliest of mankind!—

Dar. You only lose the man you love, but I
(O insupportable!) must learn to hate,
To scorn what once was all my pride and transport!
Should Edward die by this accursed crime,
(Which Heaven forbid!) he dies admired, beloved,
In the full bloom of fame and spotless honour.

To you, the daughter of illustrious grief,
Your tears remain, and sadly-sweet reflection;
You with his image, with his virtues, still,
Amidst the pensive gloom, may converse hold:—
While I—ah! nothing meets my blasted sight
But a black view of infamy and horror!
What is the loss of life to loss of virtue?
And yet how can this heavenly spark be lost?—
No! virtue burns with an immortal flame.
He is belied—some villain has abused him.

The. I honour, madam, this your virtuous grief:
But that the sultan did employ the assassin,
Is past all doubt—behold the false instructions,
By which he gain'd admittance.

[Giving her the letter the prince had dropped.]

Dar. Ha!—'Tis so!—
His hand! his seal!—From my detesting heart,
I tear him thus for ever!—Perish, Selim!
Perish the feeble wretch who more bewails him!
That were to share his guilt!—Unhappy princess!
Now let me turn my soul to thy assistance—
There is a cure, 'tis true—

Ele. A cure, Daraxa!
O say, what cure?

Dar. No; it avails not, madam;
None can be found to risk it.

Ele. None to risk it?
Quick tell me what it is, my dear Daraxa.

Dar. To find some person, that, with friendly lip,
May draw the poison forth; at least, its rage
And mortal spirit. This will bring the wound
Within the power of art: but certain death
Attends the generous deed.

Ele. (kneeling). Then hear me, Heaven!
Primesource of love! Ye saints and angels, hear me!
I here devote me for the best of men,
Of princes, and of husbands. On this cross
I seal the cordial vow: confirm it, Heaven!
And grant me courage in the hour of trial!

The. O tenderness unequal'd!
Dar. Glorious princess!

Ele. Go, Theald, quickly find the earl of Gloster,
And with him break this matter to the prince.
As for the person, leave that task to me.
I with Daraxa will your call attend:—
O all ye powers of love! your influence lend.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

GLOSTER, THEALD.

Glo. No, Theald, no; he never will consent—
I know him well; he ne'er will purchase life,
At such a rate: besides, in aid of love, [ness.
His generous pride would come, and deem it base—
The. Then is yon sun his last. The blackening
wound

Begins already to confess the poison:
Meantime, my lord, both friendship and our duty
Demand, at least, the trial. Well I know
That, poise his life with hers, he would as nothing
Esteem his own: but sure the life of thousands,
The mingled cause at once of heaven and earth,
Should o'er the best, the dearest life prevail.

Glo. Alas! my friend, you reason: Edward loves.
How weak the head contending with the heart!
Yet be the trial made.—Behold, he comes.

SCENE II.

EDWARD, GLOSTER, THEALD.

Edw. (entering.) O thou bright sun! now
hastening to those climes,
That parent-isle, which I no more shall see;
And for whose welfare oft my youthful heart
Has vainly form'd so many a fond design;
O thither bear, resplendent orb of day,
To that dear spot of earth, my last farewell!—
And oh! eternal Providence, whose course,
Amidst the various maze of life, is fix'd
By boundless wisdom, and by boundless love,
I follow thee, with resignation, hope,
With confidence and joy; for thou art good,
And of thy rising goodness is no end!—
Well met, my dearest friends.—It was too true,
The villain's threatening, and I nearly touch
That awful hour which every man must prove,

Yet every man still shifts at distance from him.
Come then, and let us fill the space between
These last important moments, whence we take
Our latest tincture for eternity,
With solemn converse and exalting friendship.—
Nay—Theald—Gloster—wound me not with tears,
With tears that fall o'er venerable cheeks!
What could the princess more?—Ah! there, indeed,
At every thought of her, I feel a weight,
A dreadful weight of tenderness, that shakes
My firmest resolution.—Where is she?

The. She burns with fond impatience to attend you.

Edw. And how, brave Gloster, did you leave the camp?

Glo. The camp, Sir, is secure: each soldier there
From indignation draws new force and spirit.
O 'tis a glorious, an affecting sight!
Those furrow'd cheeks that never knew before
The dew of tears, now in a copious shower
Are bathed. Around your tent they, anxious, crowd,
Rank over rank: some pressing for a look;
Some sadly musing, with dejected eye;
Some, on their knees, preferring vows to heaven;
And, with extended arm, some breathing vengeance.
"Base Saracens," they cry, "perfidious cowards!—
But blood shall wash out blood.—Ah! poor atonement,

Did the whole bleeding city fall a victim!"

Edw. Alas, that to repay their faithful love
I cannot live!—Yet moderate their zeal;
And let the sword of justice only strike
The faithless Selim and his guilty council.
My new-departed spirit, just escaped
From the low feverish passions of this life,
Would grieve to see the blood of innocence,
With that of guilt confounded, stain my tomb.

The. Permit me, Sir, the hope, that you yourself—
I speak it on just cause—may live to punish
This breach of all the sacred rights of men.

Edw. Why will you turn my thoughts, from earth enlarged,

To soft enfeebling views of life again?

The. Not to a vain desire of life, my lord,
I would recal them; but inspire each hope,
Advise each possibility to save it.
And there is yet a remedy.

Edw. Delusion!

The. The fair Arabian princess mention'd one.

Edw. She one?—Daraxa?—Something to her lover's crime. [complete

The. You could not wrong her thus,
Had you beheld the tempest of her soul,
Her grief, her rage, confusion, when she heard
Of Selim's baseness; had you seen that honour,
That glorious fire which darted from her eyes;
Till in a flood of virtuous sorrow sunk,
She almost equal'd Eleonora's tears.

Edw. What was it she proposed?

The. It was, my lord,
To find some person, who, with friendly lip,
Might draw the deadly spirit.—

Edw. I have heard
Of such a cure: but is it not, good Theald,
An action fatal to the kind performer?

The. Yes, surely fatal.

Edw. Name it then no more.
I should despise the paltry life it purchased.
Besides, what mortal can dispose so rashly
Of his own life? Talk not of low condition,

And of my public rank: when life or death
Becomes the question, all distinctions vanish:
Then the first monarch, and the lowest slave,
On the same level stand; in this the sons
Of equal nature all.

The. Allow me, Sir,

If 'tis a certain, an establish'd duty—
(Than duty more, the height of human virtue)
To sacrifice a transitory life,
For that kind source from whence it is derived,
And all its guarded joys, our dearest country;
It may be justly sacrificed for those
On whom depends the welfare of the public.
And there is one, my lord, who stands devoted,
By solemn and irrevocable vows,
To die for you.

Edw. To die for me!—Kind nature!

Thanks to thy forming hand, I can myself
Cheerful sustain to pay this debt I owe thee,
Without the borrow'd sufferings of another.—
No, Theald, urge this argument no more.
I love not life to that degree, to purchase,
By the sure death of some brave guiltless friend,
A few uncertain days, that often rise
Like this, serene and gay, when, with swift wing,
A moment wraps them in disastrous fate.

Glo. Did we consult to save your single life,
Was that the present question, thy refusal
Were just, were generous. But, my lord, this person,
Who stands for you devoted, should, in that,
Be deem'd devoted for the Christian cause,
The common cause of Europe and thy country;
Dies for the brave companions of thy fortune,
Who weeping now around thy tent, conjure thee
To live for them, and England's promised glory.
O save our country, Edward! save a nation,
The chosen land, the last retreat of freedom,
Amidst a world enslaved!—Cast back thy view,
And trace from farthest times her old renown:
Think of the blood that, to maintain her rights,
And guard her sheltering laws, has flow'd in battle,
Or on the patriot's scaffold: think what cares,
What vigilance, what toils, what bright contention,
In councils, camps, and well-disputed senates,
It cost our generous ancestors, to raise
A matchless plan of freedom: whence we shine,
Even in the jealous eye of hostile nations,
The happiest of mankind.—Then see all this,
This virtue, wisdom, toil, and blood of ages,
Behold it ready to be lost for ever.

In this important, this decisive hour,
On thee, and thee alone, our weeping country
Turns her distressful eye; to thee she calls,
And with a helpless parent's piercing voice.—
Wilt thou not live for her? for her subdue
A graceful pride I own, but still a pride,
That more becomes thy courage and thy youth,
Than birth and public station? Nay, for her,
Say, wouldst thou not resign the dearest passions?

Edw. O, there is nothing, which for thee, my
I, in my proper person, could not suffer! [country,
But thus to skulk behind another's life,
'Tis what I have not courage to support;
It makes a kind of coward of me, Gloster.—
But let me see this friend, whose generous virtue
Exceeds what even my favourable thoughts
Had imag'd in the selfish race of man.
The purpose claims the merit of the deed;
And ere I die, I must requite his friendship.—
Conduct him hither, Theald.

SCENE III.

EDWARD, GLOSTER.

Edw.

Ah, my Gloster,

You have not touch'd on something that here pleads
 For longer life, beyond the force of reason,
 Perhaps too powerful pleads—my Eleonora !
 To thee, my friend, I will not be ashamed
 Even to avow my love in all its fondness.
 For oh there shines in this my dearer self !
 This partner of my soul ! such a mild light
 Of careless charms, of unaffected beauty,
 Such more than beauty, such endearing goodness,
 That when I meet her eye, where cordial faith,
 And every gentle virtue mix their lustre,
 I feel a transport that partakes of anguish !
 How shall I then behold her, on the point
 To leave her, Gloster, in a distant land ?
 For ever in a stormy world to leave her ?—
 There is no misery to be fear'd like that
 Which from our greatest happiness proceeds.

SCENE IV.

EDWARD, GLOSTER, THEALD *presenting the princess*
 ELEONORA *as the person he went to bring, DARAKA.*

Edw. O Heaven !—what do I see ?—I am
 betray'd !— [Turning away.

Ele. Edward !*Edw.* O 'tis too much ! O spare me, nature !*Ele.* Not look upon me, Edward ?*Edw.* Eleonora !

How on this dreadful errand canst thou come ?

Ele. Behold me kneel—*Edw.* Why kneel you, best of women ?

You ne'er offended, ne'er in thought offended :

Thou art all truth, and love, and angel-goodness !

Why do you kneel ? O rise, my Eleonora !

Ele. Let me fulfil my vow.*Edw.* O never ! never !*Ele.* Let me preserve a life, in which is wrapt

The life of thousands, dearer than my own !

Live thou, and let me die for thee, my Edward !

Edw. For me !—thy words are daggers to my
 soul.

And wouldst thou have me then thus meanly save

A despicable life ? a life exposed

To that worst torment, to my own contempt !

A life still haunted by the cruel image

Of thy last pangs, thy agonizing throes,

The dire convulsions of these tender limbs :

And all for one—O infamy !—for one,

By love, by duty bound, each manly tie,

Even by a peasant's honour, to protect thee ?—

Yet this, though strong, invincible, is nought

To what my wounded tenderness could urge

Against thy dire request.—Should fate demand

The life we love, then, then, we must exert

The greatest act of human resignation,

We must submit.—But wouldst thou have me, say,

Doom thee myself ? with voluntary choice,

Nay, by a barbarous crime, untimely snatch

This worst of ills ? would Eleonora make me

Of all mankind the most completely wretched ?

Ele. Plead not the voice of honour. Well I know,

There is no danger, pain, no form of death,

Thou wouldst not meet with transport to protect me.

But I, alas ! an unimportant woman,
 Whose only boast and merit is to love thee ;
 Ah, what am I, with nameless numbers weigh'd ?
 With myriads yet unborn ?—All ranks, all ages,
 All arts, all virtues, all a state comprises ?
 These have a higher claim to thy protection.
 Live then for them.—O make a generous effort !
 What none but heroes can, bid the soft passions,
 The private, stoop to those that grasp the public.
 Live to possess the pleasure of a god,
 To bless a people trusted to thy care.
 Live to fulfil thy long career of glory,
 But just begun. To die for thee be mine.
 I ne'er can find a brighter, happier fate :
 And fate will come at last, inglorious fate !
 O grudge me not a portion of thy fame !
 As join'd in love, O raise me to thy glory !

Edw. In vain is all thy eloquence. The more
 Thou wouldst persuade, I with increasing horror
 Fly from thy purpose.

Ele. Dost thou love me, Edward ?*Edw.* Oh !—If I love thee ?—Witness heaven
 and earth !

Angels of death that hover round me, witness ;
 Witness these blinded eyes, these trembling arms,
 This heart that beats unutterable fondness,
 To what an agony I love thee.—

Ele.

Then

Thou sure wilt save me from the worst of pains.

Edw. O that I could from all engross thy suf-
 Pain felt for thee were pleasure ! [ferings !*Ele.*

Hear me, Edward.

I speak the strictest truth, no flight of passion,
 I speak my naked heart.—To die, I own,
 Is a dread passage, terrible to nature,
 Chiefly to those who have, like me, been happy.—
 But to survive thee—O, 'tis greatly worse !
 'Tis a continual death !—I cannot bear
 The very thought.—O leave me not behind thee !

Edw. Since nought can alter my determined
 breast,

Why dost thou pierce me with this killing image ?

Ele. Ah ! selfish that thou art ! with thee the
 The tedious toil of life will soon be o'er ; [toil,

Thou soon wilt hide thee in the quiet grave :

While I, a lonely widow, with my orphans,

Am left defenceless to a troubled world,

A false, ungrateful, and injurious world !—

Oh ! if thou lovest me, Edward, I conjure thee,

By that celestial flame which blends our souls !

By all a father, all a mother feels !

By every holy tenderness, I charge thee !

Live to protect the pledges of our love,

Our children.

Edw. Oh !—*Ele.* Our young, our helpless—*Edw.* Oh !—

Distraction !—Let me go !

Ele.

Nay, drag me with thee

To the kind tomb.—Thou canst not leave our
 children,

Exposed, by being thine, beyond the lowest !

Surrounded with the perils of a throne !—

Edw. Cruel ! no more embitter thus our last,

Our parting moments ! Set no more the terrors

Of these best passions in array against me ;

For by that Power, I swear, Father of life !

Whose universal love embraces all

That breathes this ample air ; whose perfect wisdom

Brings light from darkness, and from evil good ;

To whom I recommend thee, and my children:—
By him I swear ! I never will submit
To what thy horrid tenderness proposes !

Glos. My lord—

Edw. Oh !—these emotions are too much—
I feel a heavy languor steal upon me:
The working poison clogs the springs of life.—
Conduct me to my couch,—Ah ! Eleonora.
If we ne'er meet again—this one embrace—
Yet sink not to despair—Heaven may preserve me
By means superior to all human hope.

Ele. I will not, cannot quit thee!—

SCENE V.

ELEONORA, DARAXA.

Dar.

Princess, stay.

Think not the hand of death is yet upon him ;
Resistless sleep will first oppress his senses,
Before the last convulsive pangs come on ;
For so the numbing poison oft begins
To spread its dark malignity.

Ele.

Ha !—sleep ?—

Then is the time—thanks to inspiring Heaven !
But come, and ere the venom sink too deep,
Swift let me seize the favouring hour of sleep.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Glos. O miracle of love ! O wondrous princess !
'Tis such as thou, who keep the gentle flame
That animates society alive ;
Who make the dwellings of mankind delightful.
What is vain life ? an idle flight of days,
A still-delusive round of sickly joys,
A scene of little cares and trifling passions,
If not ennobled by such deeds of virtue !—
And yet this matchless virtue, what avails it ?
The afflicting angel has forsook the prince,
And now pours out his terrors on the princess.—
Forsook him, said I ?—no ; he must awake
To keener evils than the body knows,
Which minds alone, and generous minds, can feel.
O virtue ! virtue ! as thy joys excel,
So are thy woes transcendent ; the gross world
Knows not the bliss or misery of either.—
The prince forsakes his couch—he seems renew'd
In health—ah, short deceitful gleam of ease !

SCENE II.

EDWARD, GLOSTER.

Edw. (*advancing from his couch.*) Hail to the
fresher earth and brighter day !
I feel me lighten'd of the mortal load
That lay upon my spirits. This kind sleep
Has shed a balmy quiet through my veins.
Whence this amazing change ?—
But be my first chief care, Author of good !
To bend my soul in gratitude to thee !
Thou, when blind mortals wander through the deeps
Of comfortless despair, with timely hand,
Invisible, and by unthought-of ways,
Thus lead'st them forth into thy light again.
Glos. How fares my lord the prince ?
Edw. To health restored.
Only a kind of lassitude remains,
A not displeasing weakness hangs upon me :
Like the soft trembling of the settled deep
After a storm.

Glos. Father of health be praised !

Edw. The moment that I sunk upon my couch,
A sick and troubled slumber fell upon me :
Chaos of gloomy unconnected thought ! [ful
That in black eddy whir'd, made sleep more dread-
Than the worst waking pang. While thus I toss'd,

Ready to bid farewell to suffering clay,
Methought an angel came and touch'd my wound.
At this the parting gloom clear'd up apace ;
My slumbers soften'd ; and, with health, return'd
Serenity of mind, and order'd thought,
And fair ideas gladdening all the soul.
Aërial music too, by fancy heard,
Sooth'd my late pangs and harmonized my breast.
Through shades of bliss I walk'd, where heavenly
Sung to their lutes my Eleonora's love.— [forms
But where is she ! the glory of her sex ?
O dearer, justly dearer far than ever !
Quick, let me find her, pour into her bosom
My full, full soul, with tenderness o'ercharged,
With glad surprise, with gratitude and wonder.—
Ha ! why this silence ? this dejected look ?—
You cast a drooping eye upon the ground.—
Where is the princess ?

Glos.

She, my lord, reposes.

Edw. Reposes !—no !—It is not likely, Gloster,
That she would yield her weeping eyes to sleep,
While I lay there in agonies.—Away !
I am too feeble then to know the truth.—
Say, is she well ?

Glos.

Now show thy courage, Edward.—

Edw. O all my fears ! I shall start out to mad-
What !—while I slept ? [ness !—

Glos.

Yes.

Edw. Misery ! distraction !

My peace, my honour is betray'd for ever !
O love ! O shame ! O murder'd Eleonora !

SCENE III.

Glos. Unhappy prince ! go find thy Eleonora,
And in heart-easing grief exhale thy passion :
All other comfort, now, were to talk down
The winds and raging seas.—But yonder comes
The Arabian princess : from her tears I learn
The moving scene within.

SCENE IV.

GLOSTER, DARAXA, a Messenger from SELIM attending
at some distance.

Dar.

O ! 'tis too much !

I can no more support it.

Glos.

Generous mourner,

How is it with the princess Eleonora ?

Dar. Struck by the poison, on her couch she
A rose soft-drooping in Sabean vales [lies,
Beneath the fiery dog-star's noxious rage.
O christian chief ! I never shall forget
The scene these melting eyes have just beheld,
With mingled tears of tenderness and wonder.

Glos. How was it, Madam ?

Dar. When this pride of women,
This best of wives which in his radiant course
The sun beholds, when first she, sickening, felt
The imperious summons of approaching fate,
All robed in spotless white she sought the altar ;
And, prostrate there, for her departing soul,
The prince her husband, and her orphan children,
Implored the Eternal Mind.—As yet she held
Her swelling tears, and in her bosom kept
Her sighs repress'd : nor did the near approach
Of the pale king of terrors dim her beauty ;
No, rather adding to her charms, it breathed
A certain mournful sweetness through her features.
But as the increasing bane more desperate grew,
Wild to her bed she rush'd, and then, indeed,
The lovely fountains of her eyes were open'd ;
Then flow'd her tears.—“ Connubial bed,” she
“ Chaste witness of my tenderness for him [cried,
To save whose life I unrepining die
In bloom of youth, farewell!—Thou shalt, perhaps,
Receive a fairer, a more happy bride ;
But never a more faithful, never one
Who loves her husband with a fonder passion.”—
Here flow'd her tears afresh ; with burning lip
She press'd the humid couch, and wept again.
At last, while weary sorrow paused, she rose,
And, fearing lest immediate death might seize her,
Demanded to be led to see the prince ;
But fear of chasing from his eyes too soon
The salutary sleep that heal'd his pangs,
Restrain'd her trembling footsteps. On her couch,
Abandon'd to despair, she sunk anew,
And for her children call'd.—Her children came,
Awhile, supported on her arm, she eyed them,
With tears pursuing tears adown her cheek,
With all the speechless misery of woe.—
I see her still—O God!—the powerful image
Dissolves me into tears !—

Glos. Madam, proceed :
Such tears are virtue, and excel the joys
Of wanton pride.

Dar. Then, starting up, she went
To snatch them to a mother's last embrace ;
When straight reflecting that the piercing poison
Might taint their tender years, she sudden shrunk
With horror back :—“ O wretched Eleonora !
(She weeping cried) and must I then not taste
The poor remaining comfort of the dying,
To see a husband, clasp my dearest children,
And mix my parting soul with theirs I love ?”—
Her sad attendants, that till then had mourn'd
In silent sorrow, all at this gave way
To loud laments.—She raised her languid eye,
And casting on them round a gracious smile,
To each by name she call'd, even to the lowest,
To each extended mild her friendly hand,
Gave, and by turns received, a last farewell.—
Such is the dreadful scene from which I come.

Glos. How heighten'd now with Edward's mingled woes !

Why are my lingering years reserved for this ?

Dar. Come nearer, you, the messenger of Selim,
And bear him back this answer :—His chief aim,

He says, in stooping to solicit peace,
Was from the chains of infidels to save me.
What ! was it then to rescue me he sent,
Beneath an all-revered and sacred name,
Beneath the shelter of his hand and seal,
A murdering wretch, a sacrilegious bigot,
To stab at once the gallant prince of England,
And public faith ? nay, with a poison'd dagger
(Such his inhuman cowardice) to stab him ?—
So well, 'tis true, he judged ; the christian prince
Had now been mingled with the harmless dead,
If his bright princess, glorious Eleonora,
Had not redeem'd his dearer life with her's.
You heard in what extremity she lies.
Go, tell the tyrant then—O heaven and earth !
O vanity of virtue ! that Daraxa
Should e'er to Selim send so fell a message—
I will suppress its bitterness—Yet tell him,
This crime has placed eternal bars between us.
See my last tear to love—Arabian wilds
Shall bury 'midst their rocks the lost Daraxa.—
Away !

Glo. Behold, they bear this way the princess,
Once more to taste the sweetness of the sun,
Ere yet to mortal light she bid farewell.

SCENE V.

GLOSTER, DARAXA, THEALD, EDWARD ; ELEONORA,
borne in by her attendants, on a couch.

Ele. (*entering.*) A little on, a little further on,
Bear me, my friends, into the cooling air.—
O cheerful sun ! O vital light of day !

Edw. That sun is witness of our matchless woes,
Is witness of our innocence—Alas !
What have we done to merit this disaster ?

Ele. O earth ! O genial roofs ! Oh the dear coast
Of Albion's isle ! which I no more shall see !—

Edw. Nay, yield not to thy weakness, Eleonora !
Sustain thyself a little, nor desert me !
The all-ruling Goodness may relieve us still.

Ele. Edward ! I tremble ! terror seizes on me !
Through the rent veil of yon surrounding sky,
I had a glimpse, I saw the eternal world ;
They call, they urge me hence—Yes, I obey.
But O forgive me, Heaven ! if 'tis with pain,
With agonies, I tear my soul from his !

Edw. Heavens ! what I suffer !—How thy plain-
shoots anguish through my soul ! [*live voice*

Ele. Some power unseen—
Thy hand, my Edward—some dark power unseen
Is dragging me away.—O yet a little,
A little spare me !—Ah ! how shall I leave
My weeping friends, my husband and my children ?

Edw. Unhappy friends ! O greatly wretched
husband !

And O poor careless orphans, who not feel
The depth of your misfortune !

Ele. Lay me down ;
Soft, lay me down—my powers are all dissolved—
A little forward bend me—Oh !

Edw. Oh Heaven !
How that soft frame is torn with cruel pangs !
Pangs robb'd from me !

Ele. 'Tis thence they borrow ease—
My children ! O my children ! you no more
Have now a mother : now, alas ! no more
Have you a mother, O my hapless children !

Edw. What do I hear ! What desolating words
Are these ? more bitter than a thousand deaths !
Death to my soul ! Call up thy failing spirit,
And leave me not to misery and ruin !

Ele. Edward, I feel an interval of ease :
And, ere I die, have something to impart
That will relieve my sufferings.

Edw. Speak, my soul !
Speak thy desire : I live but to fulfil it.

Ele. Thou seest in what a hopeless state I lie ;
I who this morning rose in pride of youth,
High-blooming, promised many happy years :
I die for thee, I self-devoted die.

Think not, from this, that I repent my vow :
Or that, with little vanity, I boast it :
No ; what I did from unrepenting love,
I cheerful did, from love that knows no fear,
No pain, no weak remission of its ardour.
And what, alas ! what was it but the dictate
Of honour and of duty ? nay, 'twas selfish,
To save me from unsufferable pain,
From dragging here a wretched life without thee.
Two fears yet stand betwixt my soul and peace.
One is for thee, lest thou disturb my grave
With tears of wild despair. Grieve not like those
Who have no hope. We yet shall meet again ;
We still are in a kind Creator's hand ;
Eternal Goodness reigns. Besides, this parting,
This parting, Edward, must have come at last,
When years of friendship had, perhaps, exalted
Our love, if that can be, to keener anguish.
Think what thy station, what thy fame demanded ;
Nor yield thy virtue even to worthy passions.
My other care—my other care is idle—
From that thy equal tenderness with mine,
Thy love and generosity secure me—
Our children—

Edw. Yes, I penetrate thy fear.
But hear me, dying sweetest ! On this hand,
This cold pale hand I vow, our children never,
Shall never call another by the name
Sacred to thee ; my Eleonora's children
Shall never feel the hateful power thou fear'st.
As one in life, so death cannot divide us.
Nor high descent, nor beauty, nought that woman,
In her unbounded vanity of heart,
Can wish, shall ever tempt my faith from thee.
Shall ever, said I ? Piteous boast indeed !
O nothing can !—I should be gross of heart,
Tasteless and dull as earth, to think with patience,
Without abhorrence, of a second hymen.
Where can I find such beauty ? Where such grace,
The soul of beauty ? where such winning charms ?
Where such a soft divinity of goodness ?
Such faith ? such love ? such tenderness unequal'd ?
Such all that Heaven could give—to make me
wretched !—

Talk not of comfort—Into what a gulf,
A lone abyss of misery I fall,
The moment that I lose thee—Oh ! I know not—
I dare not think !—But these unhappy orphans—
Ah ! the dire cause that makes it double duty—
Shall now be doubly mine ; to shelter them,
These pledges of our love, I will attempt
To brave the horrors of loath'd life without thee.

Ele. Enough ! it is enough !—On this condition
Receive them from my hands.

Edw. Dear hands ! dear gift !
Dear, precious, dying, miserable gift !
With transport once received, but now with an-
guish !

Ele. All-softening time will heal thy woes. The
Soon leave the passions of the living free. [dead

Edw. Detested life !—O take me, take me with
thee !

Ele. No, Edward, live ; or else I die in vain.

Edw. Raise, raise, my Eleonora, thy sweet eyes ;
Once more behold thy children—

Ele. Oh !—'tis darkness—
A deadly weight.

Edw. Thou leavest me then for ever—

Ele. Where am I ?—Ah !—a tenant still to pain ;
The quivering flame of life leaps up a little.
Meantime, my Edward, 'tis my last request,
That thou wouldst leave me, while I yet enjoy
A parting gleam of thought.—Leave me to
Heaven !—

Gloster, farewell ; be careful of the prince ;
Attend him hence, and double now thy friendship.

Edw. Barbarian ! off !—Ah ! whither wouldst
thou drag me ?

Glos. My lord, in pity to the princess—

Edw. Oh !

Ele. Farewell ! farewell !—Receive my last
adieu ;

Edward, my dearest lord, farewell for ever !

Edw. O word of horror !—Can I ?—No ! I
cannot !—

There, take me, lead me, hurl me to perdition !

SCENE VI.

ELEONORA, DARAXA, THEALD, *Attendants.*

Ele. 'Tis past, the bitterness of death is past.—
Alas ! Daraxa, I can ne'er requite
Thy generous cares for me. Thou art the cause
My Edward lives, my children have a father,
Thy heaven-inspired proposal.—Tell him, Theald,
That, in the troubled moments of our parting,
I had forgot to beg he would restore
The Arabian princess to her friends and country.—
Thy hand—this sure, how'er in faith we differ,
Humanity, the soul of all religion,
May well permit.

Dar. By virtue's sacred fire !
Our paradise, the garden of the blest,
Ne'er smiled upon a purer soul than thine.
For me, think not of me ; such are my woes,
That I disdain all care, detest relief :
My name is trod in dust ; thine beams for ever,
The richest gem that crowns the worth of woman.

Ele. The guilt of Selim cannot stain thy virtues :
It rather lends them lustre.—Bear me back,
My dear attendants : and good Theald, come,
Come, aid my mounting soul to spring away,
From the loved fetters of this kindred clay.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

THEALD, and a Gentleman belonging to him.

The. To me a dervise!—Through the furious
Yet raging at the perfidy of Selim, [camp,
How did he safely pass?

Gent. Sir, he had fallen
A victim to their vengeance : but he told them,
His life was of importance to the prince,
That he who struck him stabb'd the heart of Edward.
This stay'd their rage ; then, after a strict search,
They let him pass through ranks of glaring eyes.
I have besides to say, an English ship,
And one from Italy, are just arrived :
The first brings great dispatches to prince Edward ;
The other, holy father, these to you. [Kneeling.

The. Go, bid this dervise enter.

SCENE II.

THEALD : he opens and looks on the dispatches.

Awful Heaven !

Great ruler of the various heart of man !
Since thou hast raised me to conduct thy church,
Without the base cabal too often practised,
Beyond my wish, my thought ; give me the lights,
The virtues which that sacred trust requires :
A loving, loved, unterrifying power,
Such as becomes a father : humble wisdom ;
Plain, primitive sincerity ; kind zeal
For truth and virtue, rather than opinions ;
And, above all, the charitable soul
Of healing peace and christian moderation.
The dervise comes.

SCENE III.

THEALD, SELIM disguised as a Dervise.

The. With me what wouldst thou, dervise ?

Selim. The princess Eleonora, lives she still ?

The. She lives, and that is all.

Selim. Allah be praised !

Then lives the honour of the brightening name
Of Saracen and Mussulman.

The. How, dervise !

What can wipe out the horror of this deed ?

Selim. The deed was execrable ; but my hand
This instant shall prevent its dire effect.

I bring a certain remedy for poison ;

Nor can it come too late, while wandering life

Yet, with faint impulse, stirs along the veins.

The. Ha ! dervise, art thou sure of what thou
say'st ?

Selim. Christian, I am ; and therefore am I here.
Haste, lead me to the princess ; though she lay
Even in the last extremity, though call'd
By the fierce angel who compels the dead,
Yet bold experience gives me rosin to hope.

Of have I seen its vital touch diffuse
New vigour through the poison'd streams of life,
When almost settled into dead stagnation ;
Swift as a southern gale unbinds the flood.
Say, wilt thou trust me with the trial, christian ?

The. Thou know'st we have great reason for
distrust ;

But fear in those who can no longer hope,
Were idle and absurd.

Selim. Bright Heaven ! what fear ?
Is there a slave of such inhuman baseness
To add fresh outrage to a dying princess ?
For virtue dying ? look into my eye :
Does one weak ray there shun the keenest gaze ?
Say, dost thou there behold so foul a bottom ?

The. No ; seeming truth and generous candour
shine

In what thou say'st. Come, follow me, good dervise.

SCENE IV.

THEALD, SELIM disguised, DARAXA.

Dar. At last through various pangs, the dying
princess

Sees the delivering moment, and demands
Thy presence, reverend christian.

The. Dervise, come.
Forbid it Heaven this aid should be too late !

SCENE V.

Dar. Heaven ! can it be?—The very face of
Selim !—

'Tis he himself—I know him, 'tis the sultan ;
And, as he shot athwart me, from his eye
Flash'd the proud lightning of affronted virtue.
He must be innocent ; his being here
Is radiant proof he must.—O weak Daraxa !
What man of virtue more would deign to lodge
His image in thy breast ?—Ah ! what avails
The light unfounded love, the treacherous friendship,
That, with inhuman cowardice, gives up
A worthy man, to infamy and slander ?—
They talk'd of aid—what aid ? [A cry heard within.

Alas ! 'tis past !

Death must be in that cry.—O let me fly
To snatch one parting look.—But see the prince,
Roused by the sounds of sorrow, this way comes.
Unhappy prince ! I venerate his tears.—
O gracious Allah ! pity and support him. [Exit.

SCENE VI.

Edw. That cry was death.—Alas ! she is no more!
The matchless Eleonora is no more !— [desert
Where am I ?—Heavens !—Ah ! what a hideous
Is now this world, this blasted world around me !

O sun ! I hate thee, I abhor thy light,
That shows not Eleonora ! Earth, thy joy,
Thy sweetness all is fled ; all, all that made
Thy ways so me delightful, Eleonora !
O Eleonora ! perish'd Eleonora !
For ever lost !—That tent ! ah me ! that tent !—

[*Going into the tent, starts back.*]

I dare not enter there. There death displays
His utmost terrors.—Pale and lifeless, there
Shelies, whose looks were love, whose beauty smiled
The sweet effulgence of endearing virtue.—
And here I last beheld her—Ay, and how,
And how beheld her ? The remorseless image
Will haunt me to the grave. I see her suffering,
With female softness, yet to pain superior ;
Fearful and bold at once, with the strong hand
Of mighty love constraining feeble nature,
To steal me from affliction.—Let me fly
This fatal ground.—But whither shall I fly ?—
To England—O I cannot bear the thought
Of e'er returning to that country more !
That country, witness of our happy days ;
Where, at each step, remember'd bliss will sting
My soul to anguish. I already hear
Malice exclaim ; nay, blushing valour sigh ;
Where is thy princess : where the wish of thousands ?
The charm, the transport of the public eye ?
Base prince ! and art thou not ashamed to bring
No trophy home but Eleonora's corse ?—
The grave too is shut up, that last retreat
Of wretched mortals—Yes, my word is pass'd,
To Eleonora pass'd. Our orphan children
Bind me to life.—O dear, O dangerous passions !—
The valiant, in himself, what can he suffer ?
Or what does he regard his single woes ?
But when, alas ! he multiplies himself
To dearer selves, to the loved tender fair ;
To those whose bliss, whose beings hang upon him,
To helpless children ; then, O ! then, he feels
The point of misery festering in his heart,
And weakly weeps his fortune like a coward.
Such, such am I ! undone—

SCENE VII.

EDWARD, GLOSTER.

Edw. My lord of Gloster,
I thought my orders were to be alone.

Glos. Forgive my fond intrusion—But I cannot
Be so regardless of thy welfare, Edward,
As to obey these orders.

Edw. But they shall,
Shall be obey'd.—I will enjoy my sorrows,
All that is left me now.

Glos. The more thy grief,
Just in its cause but frantic in degree,
Seeks aggravating solitude, the more
It suits my love and duty to attend thee,
To try to soothe—

Edw. Away ! thou never shalt.
Not all that idle wisdom can suggest,
All the vain talk of proud unfeeling reason,
Shall rob me of one tear.

Glos. Of nature's tears
I would not rob thee : they invigorate virtue ;
Softened, at once, and fortify the heart ;
But when they rise to speak this desperate language,
They then grow tears of weakness ; yes—

Edw. I care not.
Weakness, whate'er they be, I will indulge them ;
Will, in despite of thee and all mankind,
Devote my joyless days for ever to them.

Glos. Reason and virtue then are empty names ?

Edw. Hence ! leave me to my fate.—You have
undone me ;

You have madeshipwreck of my peace, among you ;
My happiness and honour ; and I now
Roam the detested world, a careless wretch.

Glos. Thy honour yet is safe ; how long I know
For full it drives upon the rocks of passion. [not,
O all ye pitying powers that rule mankind !
Who so unworthy but may proudly deek him
With this fair-weather virtue, that exults,
Glad, o'er the summer main ?—The tempest comes,
The rough winds rage aloud ; when from the helm
This virtue shrinks, and in a corner lies
Lamenting.—Heavens ! if privileged from trial,
How cheap a thing were virtue !

Edw. Do—insult me—
Rail, spare me not—rail, Gloster, all the world—
But know, meantime, thou canst not make me feel
thee—

I have no more connexion with mankind. [thee—
Glos. Insult thee, Edward ? Do these tears insult
These old man's tears ?—Friendship, my prince,
can weep,

As well as love.—But while I weep thy fortune,
Let me not weep thy virtue sunk beneath it.—
Thou hast no more connexion with mankind !—
Put off thy craving senses, the deep wants
And infinite dependencies of nature ;
Put off that strongest passion of the soul,
Soul of the soul, love to society ;
Put off all gratitude for what is past,
All generous hope of what is yet to come ;
Put off each sense of honour and of duty ;
Then use this language.—Let me tell thee, Edward,
Thou hast connexions with mankind, and great ones,
Thou know'st not of ; connexions that might rouse
The smallest spark of honour in thy breast,
To wide-awaken'd life and fair ambition.

Edw. What dost thou mean ?

Glos. What mean ?—this day, in England,
How many ask of Palestine their king,
Edward their king.—Read these.

Edw. (*opening the dispatches.*) O Gloster !—
Alas ! my royal father is no more : [Gloster !—
The gentlest of mankind, the most abused !
Of gracious nature, a fit soil for virtues,
Till there his creatures sow'd their flattering lies,
And made him—No, not all their cursed arts
Could ever make him insolent or cruel.
O my deluded father ! Little joy
Hadst thou in life ; led from thy real good,
And genuine glory, from thy people's love,
That noblest aim of kings, by smiling traitors.—
Thus weak of heart, thus desolate of soul,
Ah, how unfit am I, with steady hand,
To rule a troubled state !—She, she is gone,
Softener of care, the dear reward of toil,
The source of virtue ! She, who to a crown
Had lent new splendour, who had graced a throne,
Like the sweet seraph mercy tempering justice.
O Eleonora ! any life with thee,
The plainest could have charm'd ; but pomp and
All that a loving people can bestow, [pleasure,
By thee unshared, will only serve to fret
The wounds of woe, and make me more unhappy.

Glos. Now is the time, now lift thy soul to virtue.
Behold a crisis, sent by Heaven, to save thee.
Whate'er, my prince, can touch or can command,
Can quicken or exalt the heart of man, [father,
Now speaks to thine.—Thy children claim their
Nay, more than father, claim their double parent ;
For such thy promise was to Eleonora :
Thy subjects claim their king, thy troops their chief :
The manes of thy ancestors consign
Their long-descended glory to thy hands :
And thy dejected country calls upon thee
To save her, raise her, to restore her honour,
To spread her sure dominion o'er the deep,
And bid her yet arise the scourge of France.
Angels themselves might envy thee the joy
That waits thy will, of doing general good :
Of spreading virtue, cheering lonely worth ;
Of dashing down the proud ; of guarding arts,
The sacred rights of industry and freedom ;
Of making a whole generous people happy.
O Edward ! Edward ! the most piercing transports
Of the best love can never equal these !—
And, need I add—thy Eleonora's death
Calls out for vengeance ?—

Edw.

Ha !

Glos. If thou, indeed,
Dost honour thus her memory, then show it,
Not by soft tears and womanish complaints,
But show it like a man,——

Edw.

I will.

Glos.

Yon towers—

Edw. 'Tis true—*Glos.*

Yon guilty towers—

Edw.

Insult us still !

Glos. The murderer of thy princess riots there.*Edw.* But shall not long !—Thou art my better
genius :—

Thou brave old man ! thou hast recall'd my virtue—
I was benumb'd with sorrow—what—or where—
I know not—never to have thought of this.
Bright virtue, welcome !—vigour of the mind,
The flame from Heaven that lights up higher being,
Thrice welcome ! with thy noble servant anger,
And just revenge !—Hence, let us to the camp,
And there transfuse our soul into the troops.
This sultan's blood will ease my fever'd breast.—
Yes, I will take such vengeance on this city,
That all mankind shall turn their eyes to Jaffa,
And as they see her turrets sunk in dust,
Shall learn to dread the terrors of the just.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Selim. O MY Daraxa ! thou hast charm'd my soul !
This reconciling interview has soothed
My troubled bosom into tender joy :
As when the spring first, on the soften'd top
Of Lebanon unbinds her lovely tresses,
And shakes her blooming sweets from Carmel's
It only now remains to see the prince. [brow.—

SCENE II.

SELIM, THEALD.

The. I sought thee, worthy dervise.

Selim. Reverend Christian,
My toiling thoughts can find no fix'd repose,
Till the wrong'd sultan's vindicated honour
Shine out as bright as yon unsullied sky.
Conduct me to the prince—I claim that justice.—
It stings my conscious soul with sick impatience,
To think what Selim suffers. For a man,
Who loves the ways of truth and open virtue,
To lie beneath the burning imputation
Of baseness and of crimes—such horrid crimes !—
O 'tis a keen unsufferable torment !—
Come, let me then discharge this other part
Of my commission.

The.

That thou soon shalt do.

He straight will come this way, the king of
England,

Such now he is. Meantime, 'tis fit to tell thee,
He must be managed gently ; for his passions
Are all abroad, in wild confusion hurl'd :
The winds, the floods, and lightning mix together.—
I need not say how little, in this uproar,
Avails the broken thwarted light of reason.

Selim. Fear not.—I trust in innocence and
truth.

The. He cannot long delay ; for, as I enter'd,
I saw him parting from the hurried camp,
That lighten'd wide around him : burnish'd helms,
And glittering spears, and ardent thronging soldiers,
Demanding all the signal, when to storm
These walls devoted to their vengeance.—

Selim.

Ha !

Then let us quickly find him.—But he comes.

SCENE III.

SELIM, THEALD, EDWARD, GLOSTER.

Edw. Whence is it those barbarians here again,
Those base, those murdering cowards, dare be seen ?
What new accursed attempt is now on foot ?
What new assassination ?—Start not, dervise,
Tinge not thy caitiff cheek with reddening honour.
What, thou !—Dost thou pretend to feel reproach ?—
Art thou not of a shameless race of people,
Harden'd in arts of cruelty and blood,
Perfidious all ?—Yes, have you not profaned
The faith of nations, broke the holy tie
That binds the families of earth together,
That gives even foes to meet with generous trust,
And teaches war security ?—Your prince,
Your prince has done it.—And you should hereafter
Be hunted from your dens like savage beasts ;
Be crush'd like serpents !

The.

Sir, this dervise comes

To clear the sultan Selim from that crime, [him.
Which you, with strong appearance, charge upon

Edw. Appearance, Theald ! with unquestion'd
proof.

Doubtless the villain would be glad to change
The course by nature fix'd ; enjoy his crimes,
Without their evil.—But he shall not 'scape me.

Selim. If, king of England, in this weighty matter,

On which depends the weal and life of thousands,
You love and seek the truth, let reason judge,
Cool, steady, quiet, and dispassion'd reason.
For never yet, since the proud selfish race
Of men began to jar, did passion give,
Nor ever can it give, a right decision.

Edw. Reason has judged, and passion shall chastise,

Shall make you howl, ye cowards of the east !—
What can be clearer ?—This vile prince of Jaffa !
This infamy of princes ! sends a ruffian [him]
(By his own hand and seal commission'd, sends
To treat of peace : and, as I read his letters,
The villain stabs me.—This, if this wants light,
There is no certainty in human reason ;
If this not shines with all-convincing truth,
Yon sun is dark.—And yet these cowards come,
With lying shifts, and low elusive arts—
O ! it inflames my anger into madness !
This added insult on our understanding,
This treacherous attempt to steal away
The only joy and treasure of my life—
Sweet sacred vengeance for my murder'd princess.

Selim. The cursed wretch who did assail thy life,
O king of England, was indeed an envoy
Sent by the prince of Jaffa : this we own ;
But then he was an execrable bigot,
Who, for such horrid purposes, had crept
Into the cheated sultan's court and service,
As by the traitor's papers we have learn'd.
For know, there lives, upon the craggy cliffs
Of wild Phœnician mountains, a dire race,
A nation of assassins. Dreadful zeal,
Fierce and intolerant of all religion
That differs from their own, is the black soul
Of that infernal state. Soon as their chief,
The Old Man (so they style him) of the Mountains,
Gives out his baleful will, however fell,
However wicked and abhorr'd it be,
Though clothed in danger, the most cruel death,
They, swift and silent, glide through every land,
As fly the gloomy ministers of vengeance,
Famine and plague : they lie for years conceal'd,
Make light of oaths, nay sometimes change religion,
And never fail to execute his orders.

Of these the villain was, these ruffian saints,
The curse of earth, the terror of mankind :
And thy engagement, prince, in this crusade,
That was the reason whence they sought thy life.

Edw. False, false as hell ! the lie of guilty fear !
You all are bigots, robbers, ruffians all !
It is the very genius of your nation.
Vindictive rage, the thirst of blood consumes you ;
You live by rapine, thence your empire rose ;
And your religion is a mere pretence
To rob and murder in the name of heaven.

Selim. Be patient, prince, be more humane and
You have your virtues, have your vices too ; [just.
And we have ours. The liberal hand of nature
Has not created us, nor any nation
Beneath the blessed canopy of heaven,
Of such malignant clay, but each may boast
Their native virtues, and their Maker's bounty.
You call us bigots.—O ! canst thou with that
Reproach us, christian prince ? What brought
thee hither ?

What else but bigotry ? What dost thou here ?
What else but persecute ?—The truth is great,
Greater than thou, and I will give it way :
Even thou thyself, in all thy rage, wilt hear it.—

From their remotest source, these holy wars,
What have they breathed but bigotry and rapine ?
Did not the first Crusaders, when their zeal
Should have shone out the purest, did they not,
Led by the frantic hermit who began [spread
The murderous trade, through their own countries
The woes their vice could not reserve for ours ?—
Though this exceeds the purport of my message,
Yet must I thus, insulted in my country,
Insulted in religion, bid thee think,
O king of England, on the different conduct
Of Saracens and Christians ; when beneath
Your pious Godfrey, in the first crusade,
Jerusalem was sack'd ; and when beneath
Our generous Saladin, it was retaken.—
O hideous scene ! my soul within me shinks,
Abhorrent, from the view !—Twelve thousand
wretches,

Received to mercy, void of all defence,
Trusting to plighted faith, to purchased safety—
Behold these naked wretches, in cold blood,
Men, women, children, murder'd ! basely murder'd !—

The holy temple, which you came to rescue,
Regorges with the barbarous profanation :—
The streets run dismal torrents : Drown'd in blood,
The very soldier sickens at his carnage.
Couldst thou, O sun ! behold the blasting sight,
And lift again thy sacred eye on mortals ?—
A ruthless race ! who can do this, can do it,
To please the general Father of mankind !—
While nobler Saladin—

Edw. Away ! be gone !
With thee, vile dervise, what have I to do ?
I lose my hour of vengeance, I debase me,
To hold this talk with thee.

Selim. While truth and reason
Speak from my tongue, vile dervise as I am,
Yet am I greater than the highest monarch,
Who, from blind fury, grows the slave of passion.
Besides, I come to justify a prince,
Howe'er in other qualities below thee,
In love of goodness, truth, humanity,
And honour, Sir, thy equal—yes, thy equal.—

Edw. What ! how ! compare me with a damn'd assassin !

A matchless villain !—Ha ! presumptuous dervise !
Thou gnaw'st thy quivering lip—A smother'd
passion

Shakes through thy frame.—What villany is that
Thou darest not utter ?—Wert thou not a wretch,
Protected by thy habit, this right hand
Should crush thee into atoms.—Hence ! away !—
Go tell thy master that I hold him base,
Beyond the power of words to speak his baseness !
A coward ! an assassinating coward !
And when I once have dragg'd him from his city—
Which I will straightway do—I then will make him,
In all the gall and bitterness of guilt,
Grinding the vengeful steel betwixt his teeth,
Will make the traitor own it.

Selim. (discovering himself.) Never !

Edw. Ha !

Selim. Thou canst not, haughty monarch :—I am
I am this Selim ! this insulted Selim ! [he !
Yet clear as day, and will confound thy passion.

Edw. Thou Selim ?

Selim.

I.

Edw. Was ever guilt so bold ?

Selim. Did ever innocence descend to fear ?

Edw. This bears some show of honour. Wilt Decide it by the sword ? [thou then

Selim. I will do more—

Edw. How more ?

Selim. Decide it by superior reason.

Edw. No weak evasions.

Selim. If I not convince thee,

If by thyself I am not of this crime

Acquitted, then I grant thee thy demand.

Nay more, yon yielded city shall be thine :

For know, hot prince, I should disdain a throne

I could not fill with honour. Were I guilty,

I should not tremble at thy threatening voice ;

No, 'tis myself I fear.

Edw. What shall I think ?

Selim. Hear but one witness, and I ask no more,

To clear my name. The witness is a woman.

Her looks are truth ; fair uncorrupted faith

Beams from her eyes. Thou ne'er canst doubt such

For 'tis the expression of a spotless soul. [beauty ;

Edw. Curse on thy mean luxurious eastern arts

Of cowardice ! Thou wouldst seduce my vengeance ;

But I detest all beauty—Barbarous sultan !

Ah ! thou hast murder'd beauty ! thy fell crime—

Haste, Gloster, haste—in sight of camp and city,

Prepare the lists—Now show thyself a prince,

Or die in shameful tortures like a slave.

Selim. I came not hither or to dread thy wrath,
Or court thy mercy.

Glos. Sir, you cannot justly

Refuse him his demand. The fervent soul

Of undissembled innocence, methinks,

Is felt in what he says. First hear this person ;

And if she gives not full conviction, then,

Have then recourse to what should always be

The last appeal of reasonable beings,

Brute force.

Edw. Well then, conduct her hither, sultan.—

[SELM goes out.

Ah ! my disorder'd mind ! from thought to thought,

Uncertain, toss'd, the wreck of stormy passion !

This rage a while supports me ; but I feel

It will desert me soon, and I again

Shall soon relapse to misery and weakness.—

O Eleonora ! little didst thou think,

How deeply wretched thy dire gift of life

Would make me !

SCENE IV.

EDWARD, GLOSTER, THEALD ; to them SELIM, conducting
ELEONORA ; DARAXA.

Selim. Raise thy eyes, O king of England,
To the bright witness of my blameless honour.

Edw. No ; beauty shall no more engage my eyes,
It shall no more profane the shrine devoted

To the sweet image of my Eleonora.—

Let her declare her knowledge in this matter.

Ele. Will not my Edward bless me with a look ?

Edw. What angel borrows Eleonora's voice !—

O thou pale shade of her I weep for ever !

Permit me thus to worship thee.—Thou art !—

Amazing !—Heaven !—thou art my Eleonora !

My Eleonora's self ! my dear, my true,

My living Eleonora !—What—to whom

Owe I this miracle ? this better life ?—

Oppressive joy !—owe I my Eleonora ?

Ele. To him, that generous prince, who put his
life,

His honour on the desperate risk to save me,
When in the arms of death.—Deprived of voice,
Of motion, and of sense, benumb'd I lay ;
My frighted train around me thought me dead,
And fill'd the tent with cries ; my heart alone
Still feebly beat ; but soon the poison's force
Had driven out life from that its last retreat ;
If, in the moment of approaching fate,
He, like my guardian angel, had not brought
An antidote of wondrous power, by which
I am to light restored—to thee, my Edward !

Edw. Did he, did he preserve thee ? He, whom thus
I have with such inhuman pride insulted ?
O blind, O brutish, O injurious rage !— [madness,
They, they are wise, who, when they feel thy
Seal up their lips.—And canst thou then forgive me,
Thou who hast o'er me gain'd that noblest triumph,
The triumph of humanity—Thou canst ;
'Tis easier for the generous to forgive,
Than for offence to ask it.

Selim. Use not, prince,
So harsh a word. More than forgive, I love
Thy noble heat, thy beautiful disorder.
O ! I am too much man ; I feel, myself,
Too much the charming force of human passions,
E'er to pretend, with supercilious brow,
With proud affected virtue, to disdain them. [thee ?
Edw. How, generous sultan, how shall I requite
Here—take thy loved Daraxa, whom I meant
To have restored, when this misfortune happen'd ;
But secret-working Heaven ordain'd her stay,
To save us all.

Selim. Wert thou the lord of earth,
Thou couldst not give me more !—my dear Daraxa !

Edw. Hence to the camp, my Gloster.—Bid the
Forsake the trenches—Let unbounded joy [soldiers
Reign, fearless, o'er the mingled camp and city.—
Go, tell my faithful soldiers, that their queen
My Eleonora lives !—A prize beyond
The chance of war to give !—She lives to soften
My too imperious temper, and to make them,
To make my people happy !—O my soul !
What love e'er equal'd thine ?—O dearest ! best !
Pride of thy sex ! inimitable goodness !
Whenever woman henceforth shall be praised
For conjugal affection, men will say,
There shine the virtues of an Eleonora !—
Transporting bliss !—How bountiful is Heaven !
Depressing often, but to raise us more.

Let never those despair who follow virtue.
Love—gratitude—divide me.—Once more, sultan,
Forgive me, pardon my mistaken zeal,
That left my country, cross'd the stormy seas,
To war with thee, brave prince—to war with honour.
Now that my passions give me leave to think :
The hand of Heaven appears in what I suffer'd ;
My erring zeal has suffer'd by a zealot.

Selim. It does, O king. And venerable Christian,
I know thy moderation will excuse me ;
But since by ruling wisdom (who unweigh'd,
Unmeant, does nought) men are so various made,
So various turn'd, that in opinions they
Must blindly think, or take a different way ;
In spite of force, since judgment will be free ;
Then let us in this righteous mean agree :
Let holy rage, let persecution cease ;
Let the head argue, but the heart be peace ;
Let all mankind in love of what is right,
In virtue and humanity, unite.

AGAMEMNON.

A Tragedy.

TO

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCESS OF WALES.

MADAM,

I humbly beg leave to put this Tragedy under the protection of your Royal Highness; and hope you will condescend to accept of it, as a testimony of the most unfeigned and zealous respect, due no less to your amiable virtues than to your high rank, from, Madam,

Your Royal Highness's most dutiful and most obedient humble servant,

JAMES THOMSON.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

AGAMEMNON.

EGISTHUS.

MELISANDER.

ARCAS.

ORESTES.

TALTHYBIUS, *Herald.*

CLYTEMNESTRA.

CASSANDRA.

ELECTRA.

Attendant of CLYTEMNESTRA.

Officers, Trojan Captives, &c.

SCENE.—*The Palace of Agamemnon, in Mycenæ.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.

CLYTEMNESTRA *sitting in a disconsolate posture, and her Attendant.*

Atten. O CLYTEMNESTRA! O my royal mistress!
Can then no comfort soothe your woes a while?
E'er since that flaming signal of sack'd Troy,
That signal fix'd and promised by the king,
Was seen some nights ago, nor food has pass'd
Your loathing lips, nor sleep has bless'd your eyes.
Or if perhaps a transient slumber hush'd
Your sighs a moment, and restrain'd your tears;
Sudden, you, starting wildly, would exclaim
Of guilt, Egisthus, Troy, and Agamemnon.
Sure 'tis too much, my queen.

Clyt. Since my lost state admits of no relief,
To that sad comfort of the wretched leave me,
To yield me to my sorrows.

Atten. Hear me, Madam,
Once the dear burden of these aged arms!

My tender care from life's first opening bud!
My joy! my glory! hear your faithful servant,
And, let me add, your friend.—In reason's eye,
That never judges on a partial view,
Far less than your misfortune is your guilt.——
Your guilt.—Forgive me, 'tis too harsh a word,
For what deserves compassion more than blame.
I know the treacherous ways by which you sunk,
From pleasing peace, to these unhappy fears,
This anxious tumult.——

Clyt. Hide me from the view!
All comfort is in vain.—Away!

Atten. Allow me
To plead your injured cause against yourself.
When Agamemnon led the Greeks to Troy,
And left you, Madam, for the pomp of war;
Left you the pride of Greece in full-blown beauty,
The kindest mother and the fondest wife;
If fame says true, for Trojan captives left you—
But that apart.—How did he leave you, say?
Afflicted, out-raged, as a queen and mother;

Betray'd to Aulis with your first-born hope,
 The blooming Iphigenia, under feint
 Of her immediate marriage to Achilles ;
 And there no sooner at the wind-bound fleet
 Arrived, but you beheld her spotless blood
 Stream on the sullied altar of Diana,
 The price of winds, of a dear-purchased gale,
 To bear them on to Troy. Thus pierced with grief,
 Then fired by turns to rage, almost to vengeance,
 At an ambitious, cruel, haughty husband ;
 While all your passions were together mix'd,
 And ready for a change ; was you not left
 In a submissive soothing lover's power,
 Ordain'd your partner in the sovereign rule,
 O'er Argos and Mycenæ, but to you
 As pliant still as Agamemnon stately ?

Clyt. (rising.) Alas ! too true ! you touch the source of woe.

Why did you leave me, barbarous Agamemnon ?
 Why leave me weeping o'er a murder'd daughter ?
 Why helpless leave me to a troubled mind ?
 Ah ! why yourself betray me to a lover ?
 What arts Egisthus used too well I know ;
 All that can softly steal or gaily charm
 The heart of woman—Hence dear sad ideas !
 Destroyers hence ! And dare you tempt me still,
 Perfidious Sirens ! in that very moment
 When your false charms have wreck'd my peace
 for ever ?

Oh, nature ! wherefore, nature, are we form'd
 One contradiction ? the continual sport
 Of fighting powers ? Oh ! wherefore hast thou sown
 Such war within us, such unequal conflict,
 Between slow reason and impetuous passion ?
 Passion resistless hurries us away,
 Ere lingering reason to our aid can come,
 And to upbraid us then it only serves.
 Tormentor, cease !

Atten. You wrong yourself too much.
 Think, Madam, how for years you baffled love :
 Nor could Egisthus, though he touch'd your heart,
 Though many a midnight tear, and secret sigh,
 To me, and me alone, disclosed the pangs
 That dimm'd your fading cheek ; yet could he not,
 With all his arts, his love, submission, charms,
 O'ercome the struggling purpose of your soul ;
 Till Melisander, to a desert isle,
 He banish'd from your ear.

Clyt. Ah, Melisander !
 Given to the beasts a prey, or wilder famine ;
 Ah, perish'd friend ! serene directing light,
 By Agamemnon left to guide my counsels ;
 Whom every science, every muse adorn'd,
 While the good honest heart enrich'd them all ;
 Oh hadst thou still remain'd, then I, this day,
 Had been as glorious as I now am wretched !
 There breathes a felt divinity in virtue,
 In candid unassuming generous virtue,
 Whose very silence speaks ; and which inspires,
 Without proud formal lessons, a disdain
 Of mean injurious vice. But lost with him,
 With Melisander, reason, honour, pride,
 Truth, sound advice, my better genius fled ;
 I friendless, flatter'd, importuned and charm'd,
 Was left alone with all-seducing love ;
 Love to the future blind, each sober thought,
 Each consequence despising, scorning all,
 But what its own enchanting dreams suggest.
 What could I do ?—Away ! self-flattering guilt !
 I should have thought when honour once is sullied,

Not weeping mercy's tears can wash it clean ;
 And that one blot on mine diffused a stain
 O'er the proud honour of a wedded king,
 And o'er my children's, my poor blameless chil-
 dren's !

Whose cheeks will kindle at their mother's name :
 I should have thought—Would I could think no
 more !

To think is torture !

Atten.

What avails it, Madam—

Clyt. O Melisander ! if the dead could hear,
 I would invoke thy friendly influence now,
 Would wish thee present in this hour of trouble.
 Perhaps there is in wisdom, gentle wisdom,
 That knows our frailties, therefore can forgive,
 Some healing comfort for a guilty mind,
 Some power to charm it into peace again,
 And bid it smile anew with right affections.
 No ! fruitless wish !—It cannot, cannot be !
 Egisthus who may henceforth give me laws,
 Dread of discovery, that worst tyrant, shame,
 And my own conscious blotted heart forbid it,
 Forbid retreat—

Atten.

Madam, behold the man,
 Who, then upon the watch, observed the signal
 Of conquer'd Troy, and now attends your orders
 To give a full account of what he saw.

SCENE II.

CLYTEMNESTRA, her Attendants, and the Man who observed the signal.

Clyt. Are you then sure that you beheld this signal ?

Or was it not some vision of the brain,
 That painted, while you slept, your waking wish ?
 Or else perhaps some meteor of the night ?

Man. Madam, Troy doubtless lies one heap of ruins ;

I saw the signal of its fate distinctly.
 The night was dark and still. A heavier gloom
 Ne'er cover'd earth. In lowering clouds, the stars
 Were muffled deep ; and not one ray, below,
 O'er all Mycenæ glimmer'd, or around it.
 When straight at farthest east, a ruddy light
 Sprung up, and wide, increasing roll'd along ;
 By turns diminish'd, and by turns renew'd,
 A wave of fire : at last, it flamed, confess'd,
 From isle to isle, and beachy point to point ;
 Till the last blaze at Nauplia ended, plain.
 A glorious sight, and as a Greek rejoiced me.

Clyt. How sits the wind ?

Man. It blows from Troy, direct ;
 A bold and steady gale.

Clyt.

'Tis well. Retire.
 Your care and faithful pains shall be rewarded.

SCENE III.

CLYTEMNESTRA, her Attendant.

Clyt. He comes ! he comes ! the hapless victor comes !

Even now his trophied vessel streaks the main,
 And ploughs the billows with triumphant prow ;
 Or by glad crowds received, perhaps, he hails
 His native shore, and presses on to shame.
 Even now with glory charged, with conquest gay,

Crown'd with the laurels of ten famous years,
He dreams to join them to the peaceful olive ;
And after rugged toils and perilous war,
Soft to repose him on the myrtle bed
Of calm domestic bliss. How vain the hopes !
How short the prospect of believing man ?
I dare not look before me, dare not paint
The rising storm.

Atten. Behold Egisthus, Madam.

Clyt. Leave me.

SCENE IV.

CLYTEMNESTRA, EGISTHUS.

Egis. (after some silence.) And is it thus, O
Clytemnestra,
Thus that, in hours of danger, lovers meet ?

[*Pausing.*]

Still coldly silent, still the look averted,
Where not one softness glows ? While anger, fear,
Disgust, and sick repentance, shifting, cloud
Your varied cheek. 'Tis plain you never loved.

Clyt. Oh that I never had !

Egis. You never did.

The very power to wish it proves you did not.

Clyt. He ne'er deserved my love who dares
suspect it.

Egis. Not to suspect it, weakness were and folly.

Clyt. Nor only doubt ; believe your doubts.

Egis. I do.

Clyt. You do !

Egis. Nay more, am of their truth assured.

Clyt. 'Tis base, ungrateful, an ungenerous insult,
To tell me this. Urge not too far, Egisthus,
Urge not too far my guilt-dejected spirit.

Though you have trampled on my haughty virtue,
That noble pride of soul, which knows no fear,
And bears no insult ; yet to you, at least,
To you of all mankind, I will be bold,
As I had never err'd, will be a queen,
The blood of Jove, be Clytemnestra still.

Egis. Be temperate, Madam : I have told you
nothing,

But that I am not worthy of your love.

Clyt. Curse on that pride ! which, with affected
brow,

Humility conceals. And am I then so vile,
So lost to reason, honour, common honour ;
As without love, that all-compelling fury,
Without debasing, thoughtless, blind blind love ;
To bow me from the height of happy life,
To this low fearful state of coward shame ?
Mistake me not.—I would not waste one word,
One passing word, affronted thus to save you
From jealousy's worst rage ; did not, alas !
A kind of mournful justice to myself
Tear from my swelling heart the mean confession.
How art thou fallen ! to what dishonour fallen !
Unhappy Clytemnestra !

Egis. Harsh construction !

And yet these frowns delight, that anger charms me.

O more than lovely ! O majestic fair one !

Since you then know the jealous force of love,
Forgive its tender fears, its fond offence ;
Offence I could not mean.

Clyt. Ill-fated she !

Who must forgive.

Egis. Nay, rather cast me from you,
Than thus upbraid me with so forced a pardon.

O Clytemnestra, where are now those looks,
Those looks of smiling heaven, of radiant sweetness,
That waked our morn of love ? Within whose sphere,
No evil durst approach, no sadness dwell ;
While the charm'd gazer knew nor fear nor danger ?
And set they then at last in gloomy quarrels ?
Let us not quarrel, why should lovers quarrel ?
Life is for that too short, too precious time ;
These moments chiefly, these impetuous moments,
That to the brink of ruin seem to roll
Our mingled fate. Even now—

Clyt.

'Tis true ! 'Tis true !

Alas ! methinks in every hollow blast,
That shakes this palace, Agamemnon comes.
Yes, yes, Egisthus, still a proof remains,
A matchless proof of love, I mean to give you.
Glad will I throw this regal pomp aside,
And, instant, with you seek some distant country,
Some gloomy Thracian dale, where piny Hemus
May wrap us in impenetrable shade !
There, there, the coarsest life, fed by hard toil,
Will be luxurious ease to what I feel,
To this big pang that labours at my heart,
And fires my mingling passions into anguish.
Quick ! let us fly, Egisthus, fly this moment !
The next may seize us, bind us down to shame,
Detested shame !

Egis.

What ! Clytemnestra ! fly !

That is indeed the road direct to shame,
To infamy for ever. He who flies,
In war or peace, who his great purpose yields,
He is the only villain of this world :
But he who labours firm and gains his point,
Be what it will, which crowns him with success,
He is the son of fortune and of fame,
By those admired, those specious villains most,
That else had bellow'd out reproach against him.

Besides your husband, your vain-glorious hus-
band,

Proud Agamemnon, who ten years has warr'd
At Troy, to scourge your sister Helen's rape,
Dream you that he would not pursue our flight,
Though we took shelter in Cimmerian shades,
And drag us back, the scorn of hissing Greece,
To then deserved, to true, unpitied shame ?

Clyt. Excuse my weaker heart. But how,

Egisthus,

How shall I bear an injured husband's eye ?
The fiercest foe wears not a look so dreadful,
As does the man we wrong.

Egis.

Madam, your fears

Cast a false glare upon your troubled reason,
That blinds it quite.—An injured husband he !
He wrong'd ! No, Clytemnestra never, never,
Can never wrong her tyrant Agamemnon,
Tyrant of common Greece ; can never wrong
The man who leaves her ten regardless years,
For the vain honours of a foolish war ;
Nay, who consumed those years, if fame speaks
true,

In nothing less than war ; instead of war,
In shameful squabbles with his nobler friends,
About their captive females, training out
An amorous revel rather than a war,
Far from his country, family, and queen.
And can you wrong this false one ? Think of Aulis,
How basely to that port you was betray'd,
And what dire nuptials waited there your daughter.
Think with what price he bought his cruel trophies.
Behold the first-born blossom of your youth,

Your Iphigenia, her mild eyes dejected,
 Her cheek o'ercast with fear, her bosom bare,
 An helpless, harmless, uncomplaining victim,
 Stabb'd by the murderous Calchas; whilst her father,
 Her unrelenting father, to protect
 The sacrifice, stands by. Behold, she bleeds,
 Pours the rich streams she drew from that fair bosom,
 Falls like a drooping flower untimely cut;
 And all to purchase for her sire's impatience,
 From some fell demon that belied Diana,
 A rising gale. The gale begins to blow,
 The pendants flutter; when away he goes,
 Gaily he goes; and leaves a wretched mother
 To weep her murder'd child. If yet one spark
 Of wonted spirit burns in Clytemnestra,
 If she still lives to justice and to nature; [geance;
 These, these are wrongs that call aloud for ven-
 And there are hands that boldly—start not,
 That will with pride avenge you. [madam—

Clyt. Ha! what hands?
 What vengeance, say? Touch not so wild a string;
 It wakes new discord in my jarring soul.
 To the just gods, not us, pertaineth vengeance.
 I cannot, will not, e'er consent to—Gods!
 Where roves my tongue?—You did not mention
 that,

You did not mean it sure—O spare, Egisthus,
 In pity spare my last remains of virtue!
 Oh make me not beyond recovery vile!
 A horror to myself!—how wretched they,
 Who feel, yet cannot save, their dying virtue!

[*A shout heard.*

What means this transport of the maddening
 people?

Oh my presaging heart!—Save me!—Again!
 Ah! little think they how their joy distracts me!

Egis. Some move this way—Resume your
 temper, Madam.

SCENE V.

To CLYTEMNESTRA an Officer belonging to the court.

Offi. Madam, the king is near, from Nauplia
 comes;

But such rejoicing crowds around him throng,
 As makes his journey slow. Just now arrived
 Talthybius brings the news, and craves admittance.
Clyt. Conduct him hither.

SCENE VI.

Clyt. (alone.) Oh too faithful signal!
 Now must I take another step in vice.
 Down, stubborn heart! and learn dissimulation:
 Yes, learn to smile, though sorrow wrap thee
 round;
 Learn to be friends with baseness.—See! how gay
 This herald strides along! Mistaken man!

SCENE VII.

*CLYTEMNESTRA, TALTHYBIUS, with some Grecian soldiers
 that attend him.*

Clyt. Welcome, Talthybius; welcome, ye brave
 Greeks:
 How fares the king?

Talth. Madam, the king is well;
 Health, happiness, and glory, join to crown him.
 His heart impatient to confer with yours,
 Sends me before him with its warmest wishes,
 Its warmest gratulations. "Tell," he said,
 "Go tell my Clytemnestra, that the thoughts
 Of meeting her awake a dearer joy
 Than conquest ever gave: even tedious seems
 My people's love, that loses me a moment."
 This crown, which circled once the royal brows
 Of Hecuba, of Priam's lofty queen,
 He prays you to accept.

Clyt. There set it down.
 I own, Talthybius, the soft moisture fills
 My womanish eyes, while on the sudden turns
 Of fate I think, on fortune's sad reverses.
 Oft when blind mortals think themselves secure,
 In height of bliss, they touch the brink of ruin.
 But sure your voyage has been wondrous
 quick,
 Not three full days.—Is all the fleet return'd?

Talth. No, madam; none, except this single
 ship,

Which bore the king: the rest are scatter'd wide.
 When to the joyous breeze we spread our
 sails,

And left that bay, where Simois and Scamander
 Mix with the rapid Hellespont; while Troy,
 Or what was Troy, yet wreathing smoke to heaven,
 And Ida's woody top, receding, sunk
 Beneath the trembling main, the sky was fair;
 And, wing'd our course with slender airs, we
 sail'd,

Till straight, as evening fell, the fluttering gale,
 Increasing gradual from the red north-east,
 Blew stiff and fierce. At last the tempest howl'd.
 Next morning, nought but angry seas and skies
 Appear'd, conflicting, round. Meantime, right on,
 Our strong-ribb'd vessel drove before the blast,
 That, falling somewhat of its fury, gave us
 A quick auspicious voyage. Safe, we pass'd
 The Cyclad isles, that, o'er the troubled deep,
 Seem'd then to float amidst the mingling storm.
 Only at one, with much ado, we touch'd,
 Nor without risk.

Clyt. And why?
Talth. Madam, compell'd
 By sacred pity. On the foaming beach,
 A miserable figure beckoning stood,
 Horrid and wild, with famine worn away.
 His plaintive voice, half by the murmuring surge
 Absorb'd, just reach'd our ears. In Greek he
 call'd,

And strong adjured us by the gentle gods,
 That make the wretched their peculiar care,
 To bear him thence, from savage solitude,
 Into the cheerful haunts of men again.

Clyt. What?—Of condition look'd he?

Talth. So he seem'd;
 Though dimm'd by helpless solitary life.
 The king regards him much—Forgive me, Madam;
 I see the rufel image but disturbs
 Your generous soul.

Clyt. I thank you, good Talthybius;
 And from the king himself will learn the rest.
 This ring, on which a victory is carved
 With curious art, befits the news you bring.
 I am your debtor still; and, soldiers, yours.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

CLYTEMNESTRA, Attendant.

Clyt. ARRIVED SO SOON! I am not half prepared:
My features all are sunk with conscious shame;
My eyes are yet too tender to dissemble.

Atten. Madam, be firm. Wipe off these gloomy
tears,

In which too plain is read your troubled soul.
Just now the trumpet spoke the king's approach.

Clyt. 'Tis come, at last, the trying hour is come!
Oh that my heart were hard, and features false!—
Again these trumpets swell—

Atten. A moment, Madam,
A moment will betray you.

Clyt. Open, earth,
And swallow up my shame!—What can I do?
Where look? what say? confusion! torture!

Atten. Madam—
Clyt. Ah, coward that I am! Was there no
dagger

To save this tenfold death?

Atten. Hark! loud and near,
The triumph comes.

Clyt. Well—give me breath—
[*Endeavouring to compose her agitation.*]

Agam. (*behind the scenes.*) A moment
Leave me, my friends.

Clyt. Ha! heard you not his voice?
Yes, yes, 'tis he! Go bring my children hither:
They may relieve me.

Atten. O remember!
Clyt. Heavens!

SCENE II.

AGAMEMNON, CLYTEMNESTRA.

Agam. Where is my life! my love! my Clytem-
nestra!

O let me press thee to my fluttering soul,
That is on wing to mix itself with thine!
O thou, for whom I live, for whom I conquer,
Than glory brighter! O my Clytemnestra!
Now, in this dear embrace, I lose the toils
Of ten years' war! absence, with all its pains,
Is by this charming moment wiped away.
All-bounteous gods! Sure, never was a heart
So full, so blest as mine.— [*Discovering her disorder.*]

But whence, my fairest!
What mean these tears?—Not tears of happy love,
Such as I shed.—What means that clouded look,
Whose downcast sweetness will not shine upon me?
Why this cold meeting? Why unkindly damp'd
My ardour thus? Oh speak, my Clytemnestra!

Clyt. Forgive me, Agamemnon; but I cannot,
Alas! I cannot see your face again,
Without reflecting where I saw you last.
Aulis is present to my eyes anew,
The ships, the chiefs, the guards, the bloody Calchas,
All the dire pomp of sacrifice around:
Anew my daughter bleeds, basely deceived!

And when I see that awful brow, that doom'd her,
Can Agamemnon wonder at my tears?

Agam. Why will my Clytemnestra add newstings
To what here rankles but too deep already?

Ah! why impute to me the work of fate?
'Tis not indulging private inclination,

The selfish passions, that sustains the world,
And lends its rulers grace; no, 'tis not thence

That glory springs, and high immortal deeds:
The public good, the good of others, still

Must bear fond nature down, in him who dares
Aspire to worthy rule; imperious honour

Still o'er the most distinguish'd lords it most.
Was it for me?—Let even your passions judge—

For Agamemnon was it, when ordain'd,
By common voice, the general of the Greeks;

While twenty kings beneath my banner march'd;
And while around me full-assembled Greece,

Indignant, kindled at your sister's rape,
On her old native foe demanding vengeance,

On faithless Asia: Was it then for me,
To quench this glorious flame? And to refuse

One life to thousands, to those generous thousands,
That for my honour, for the dearer honour

Of Clytemnestra's family, stood all
Prepared to die? If to the mingled voice,

Of honour, duty, glory, public good,
Of the commanding gods, I had been deaf;

And, in the feeble father, poorly sunk
The Greek, the chief, the patriot, and the king,

Greater than king, the general of the Greeks;
Then you yourself, my Clytemnestra's self,

Must (let her heart avow the truth) have scorn'd
me.

Nor think it was an easy resignation.
Oh Clytemnestra! Had you seen within,

What here within my tortured bosom pass'd;
To that my battles since were only sport.

No, not the kindest mother, bathed in tears,
As o'er her agonising babe she hangs,

Feels what I suffer'd then—You may remember—
Again the father melts me at the thought—

You may remember how I hid my face;
Ashamed to let the Greeks around behold

The tears, that misbecame their general's cheek.
Then cease to blame what rather merits pity,

I might add, praise.—He, who the father's heart
More tender has than mine, too tender has it.

I love my children, as a father should;
Besides, I love them from a softer cause,

I love my Clytemnestra.

Clyt. Had, alas!

Had Agamemnon loved me, would he, nay,
Could he have left me in the rage of grief,

My daughter yet fresh bleeding in my sight?
Left me so long? love surely must have found,

In the wide round of ten revolving years,
Some way to see me, to prevent these sorrows—

Why was I thus abandon'd, Agamemnon?
Agam. Let me kiss off these tears. O beauteous
tears!

If shed by doubting love, if shed for absence.

Instead of these reproaches, ask me rather,
How I that absence bore : and here all words,
All eloquence is dumb, to speak the pangs,
That lurk'd beneath the rugged brow of war.
When glaring day was closed, and hush'd the camp,
Oh ! then, amid ten thousand other cares,
Those stung the keenest that remember'd thee,
That on my long-left Clytemnestra thought,
On what wild seas and mountains lay between us.

Clyt. Unhappy man !

Agam. What says my Clytemnestra ?

Clyt. Unhappy mortals ! by vain words deceived,
To their own pride, to joyless honour slaves.

Agam. He, he, alone, can claim a right to bliss,
Who has fulfill'd the painful task of honour.

Clyt. But what avails a right to vanish'd bliss ?

Agam. Let me once more adjure thee, Clytemnestra,

By every tender name of love adjure thee,
To lose in kind oblivion these our past —
I would not call them quarrels—Ah ! there was,
There was a time—I will indulge the thought—
When everlasting transport tuned our souls :
When join'd to vernal life, the spring of love
Around us gaily blow'd ! and heaven and earth,
All smiling nature look'd delighted on.

Yet, would my Clytemnestra lend her aid,
I know a passion still more deeply charming
Than fever'd youth e'er felt ; and that is love,
By long experience mellow'd into friendship.
How far beyond that froward child of fancy !
With beauty pleas'd awhile, anon disgusted,
Seeking some other toy ; how far more noble
Is this bright offspring of unchanging reason,
That fonder grows with age, and charms for ever !

It is not often, Clytemnestra, thus,
That I submit to double my entreaties ;
But, oh destroy not the collected hopes
Of life and love ! Oh make not conquest hateful !
I shall abhor it, if it cost me thee,
Cost me thy love. A daughter was too much,
And ten years' absence from my Clytemnestra.
Add not to these a loss I cannot bear,
The loss of thee, thou loveliest of thy sex !
And once the kindest !

Clyt. Oh !

Agam. Turn not away ;
There is relenting goodness in thy look.

Clyt. Alas ! untimely fondness—Agamemnon !
Too generous Agamemnon ! you distress me.
Would you were not so kind, so tender, now !
Or ne'er had been so cruel !

Agam. 'Tis unjust

To call me cruel. Fate, the gods, our fortune,
Were cruel to us both—What could I more
To soothe our parting woes, and ease my absence ?
I left you Melisander to advise you,
Left you the wisest, faithfullest and best—
Oh whispering nature ! Are not these my children ?

SCENE III.

AGAMEMNON, CLYTEMNESTRA, ELECTRA, ORESTES.

Agam. My daughter ! my Electra !

Elec. O my father !

Agam. Come to my arms, my boy ! my dear
Orestes !

In whom I live anew, my younger self !

And thou, Electra ! in thy opening cheek
I mark thy mother's bloom : even so she look'd,
Such the mild light with which her beauty dawn'd.
Oh thou soft image of my Clytemnestra !
My other Iphigenia !

Elec. Oh my father !

My joy ! my pride ! my glory ! whom, in dreams,
I oft have seen, as if return'd from Troy ;
But still unwelcome morning, with a tear,
Wiped out the dear illusion of the night.
And is it then no more a faithless vision ?
Oh, 'tis my father ! whose departure hence,
And Iphigenia's death, I just remember.
How glorious, Iphigenia, was thy death !
A death I envy rather than lament.
Who would not die to gain immortal fame,
Deliver Greece, and crown a father's glory ?

Agam. Come to my arms again, my generous
daughter !

And thou my son ! O that thy tender years
Had suffer'd thee to share our toils at Troy !
'Tis war that forms the prince : 'tis hardship,
toil ;

'Tis sleepless nights, and never-resting days ;
'Tis pain, 'tis danger, 'tis affronted death ;
'Tis equal fate for all, and changing fortune ;
That rear the mind to glory, that inspire
The noblest virtues and the gentlest manners.
Where shall I find, to teach thee these, Orestes,
Another Troy ?

Orest. How happy had I been

To have beheld what I must only hear !
But I will hear it often, every day ;
Will learn your story, study your example ;
Will try to mix your virtues with your blood,
And not disgrace the laurels I inherit.
My bosom flutters with I know not what—
—Forgive me, Sir, I am too young to say it—
But something here I feel, which bids me hope
That I shall not betray my father's honour.

Agam. Son of my soul !—Look here, my
Clytemnestra !

Look here and weep with tenderness and transport !
What is all tasteless luxury to this ?
To these best joys, which holy love bestows ?
O nature ! parent nature ! thou alone
Art the true judge of what can make us happy !

Enter an Officer belonging to the court.

Off. Egisthus, Sir, attends.

Agam. Go, bid him enter.

Retire, my Clytemnestra, my dear children :
We soon shall meet again, till then farewell.

SCENE IV.

Agam. Obey me, features, for one supple
moment :

You shall not long be tortured. Here, in courts,
We must not wear the soldier's honest face.
He little thinks I have him in the snare
Of Melisander, whom, in my return,
I from that desert island chanced to save,
To which the ruffian—

SCENE V.

AGAMEMNON, EGISTHUS,

Egis.

Health to Agamemnon !

And happiness responsive to his glory !

Agam. Cousin, I greet you well.

Egis.

Forgive me, sir.

You have surprised us with this quick return :

For by that signal, whose illustrious flame

Rejoiced all Greece, we did not hope your presence

These three days hence. Forgive, that, unprepared,

We only with that joy, that loyal transport,

Which swell each Grecian bosom, thus receive you.

And truly such a burst I have not seen

Of that best triumph. City, country, all,

Is in a gay triumphant tempest tost.

I scarce could press along. The trumpet's voice

Is lost in loud repeated shouts that raise

Your name to heaven. Ten thousand eyes, below,

Ache to behold the conqueror of Troy.

Agam. The noblest praise that can salute my ear,

The sweetest music, is my people's joy.

But sure your tongue has done it ample justice ;

Trust me, you blazon a description well.

I have not heard so much obliging speech

These many years.

Egis.

Misconstrue not my zeal :

On the full heart obedient language waits.

I feel so deep your glory, Agamemnon,

As mingles with my joy a sort of passion,

That almost touches envy. O ye gods !

Has, while I lived, a war the most renown'd

Which any age e'er saw, or shall again

Be seen ; a war, whose never-dying fame

Will cover earth, and reach remotest time,

Has such a war adorn'd my days, and I

Not shared its glory ? Pining here, unknown,

In nameless peace—how have I lost my life ?

Agam. This ardour is the mode. But know, *Egis*—

That ruling a free people well in peace, [thus,

Without or yielding or usurping power ;

Maintaining firm the honour of the laws,

Yet sometimes softening their too rigid doom,

As mercy may require ; steering the state,

Through factious storms, or the more dangerous

calms

Of peace, by long continuance grown corrupt ;

Besides the fair career which fortune opens

To the mild glories of protected arts,

To bounty, to beneficence, to deeds

That give the gods themselves their brightest beams :

Yes, know that these are, in true glory, equal,

If not superior, to deluding conquest :

Nor less demand thy conduct, courage, care,

And persevering toil.

Egis.

Say, thankless toil,

Harsh and unpleasing ; that instead of praise

And due reward, meets oftener scorn, reproach,

Fierce opposition to the clearest measures :

Injustice, banishment, or death itself :

Such is the nature of malignant man.

Not so the victor's meed : him all approve,

Him all admire.

Agam.

Yet though a toilsome task,

Though an ungrateful labour oft to rule ;

I not so hardly of mankind, *Egisthus*,

Presume to judge. Truth, wisdom, courage, justice,

Beneficence, and for the public good

A constant tenor of well-laid designs,

Must still be awful in the worst of times,
Be amiable, dear ; while worth, at last,
Will light up worth, and virtue kindle virtue.

You was however eased of half the toil,

By him I left to counsel Clytemnestra,

By Melisander.

Egis.

Would to heaven I had !

Agam. You much amaze me.—Is not Melisander

Wise, just, and faithful ?

Egis.

Sir, I must confess

He wore a specious mask—

Agam.

Beware, *Egisthus* ;

I know his steadfast worth, and will not bear

The farthest hint that stains the man I love.

Egis. Then urged by truth, and in my own

I boldly will assert him, Agamemnon, [defence,

To be more apt to trouble and embroil,

Than serve a state. A certain stubborn virtue,

I would say affectation of blunt virtue,

Beneath whose outside froth, fermenting lay

Pride, envy, faction, turbulence of soul,

And democratic views, in some sort made him

A secret traitor, equally unfit

Or to obey or rule. But that I cheek'd

His early treasons, here at your return,

You might have found your kingdom a republic.

Agam. Oh, I shall lose all patience !— [Aside.

You do well,

To give your accusation open speech.

Meantime, remember you must fully prove it,

You must !—And he who Melisander proves

The wretch you have described, proves man is

vain,

And saps the broad foundations of all trust.

I know he would not patiently look on,

And suffer ill designs to gather strength,

Awaiting gentle seasons ; yes, I know,

He had a troublesome old-fashion'd way

Of shocking courtly ears with horrid truth.

He was no civil ruffian ; none of those,

Who lie with twisted looks, betray with shrugs—

I wax too warm—But he was none of those,

Is none of those dust-licking, reptile, close,

Insinuating, speckled, smooth court-serpents,

That make it so unsafe, chiefly for kings,

To walk this weedy world—Pardon my heat—

I wander from the purpose—You, *Egisthus*,

Must prove your charge, to Melisander's face

Must prove it.

Egis.

Surely—Since the princely faith

Of your own blood you doubt.—

Agam.

Friendship and truth

Are more a-kin to me than blood.

Egis.

You shall,

You shall have proof ; but to his face you cannot.

Agam.

But to his face I will !—I cannot ! why ?

Egis.

He wanders far from hence, I know not

where :

For when I found him an undoubted traitor,

Though he the heaviest punishment deserved ;

Yet in regard to that esteem, which, once,

You deign'd to bear him, banishment alone

Was all I did inflict.

Agam.

I thank you, sir—

O you are wondrous good !—But tell me, how,

How durst you meddle in the sphere assign'd

To Clytemnestra ? He was left to her ;

To be her counsellor I left my friend,

Left Melisander ; left a man, whom long,

Whom well I knew ! perhaps to check you, left him :

And you pretend, you !—But I will be calm—
These passions in a king to his inferiors,
Who cannot answer equal, are not comely.
Forgive my transport—A more quiet hour
Shall sift this matter to the bottom, shall
Do Melisander or Egisthus justice.

SCENE VI.

Egis. Now go thy way, weak, open-hearted man,
Thus to declare the ruin thou intendest.
Go, rate thy Trojan slaves ; and elsewhere practise
This insolence of camps. Tame, as I seem,
Submissive, mild, and patient of thy threats ;
Yet, ere to-morrow's sun beholds Mycenæ,
My sure-aim'd blow shall pierce thy swelling heart,
And cool this tyrant fever in thy veins.
Were not our blood, our kindred blood at variance,
And therefore burning with immortal hate ;
Had not thy father Atreus, at a banquet,
A dreadful banquet ! from whose sight the sun
Turn'd back eclipsed, served—Monstrous !—up to
mine,

To his own brother, to the pale Thyestes,
His murder'd sons : didst thou not wear a crown
Then by thy father ravish'd from our line,
Mycenæ's crown, which he unjustly seized,
And added to his own, to that of Argos :
Had I not stain'd thy bed with Clytemnestra :
Though safety did not urge, and self-defence :
Yet this vile treatment, treatment fit for slaves ;
Thanks to thy fury ! this has fix'd thy doom.
Some foolish scruples, that still hung about me,
Are by this friendly tempest blown away.—

But Clytemnestra comes. How shall I calm
Her troubled mind ? How bring herto my purpose ?

SCENE VII.

CLYTEMNESTRA, EGISTHUS,

Clytem. Here let me kneel, Egisthus, grasp thy
knees ;

Here let me grow till my request be granted.
Now is the very crisis of my fate.

Egis. What sight is this I see ? Rise, Clytem-
nestra !

Thou fairest, most majestic of thy sex !
It misbecomes thee much, this suppliant posture.
Oh, there is nothing, nothing, sure, which you
Need stoop to ask ! Speak, and command it, madam.

Clytem. Then let us henceforth be, as if this love
Had never been betwixt us.

Egis. Cease to love thee !
What wild demand ! Impossible !—Even now
Endear'd by danger, by distress endear'd,
I for thee feel a fonder pang, than e'er
I felt before.

Clytem. No ! these deluding words
Can charm no longer ; their enchantment flies ;
And in my breast the guilty passions jar,
Unkind, unjoyous, unharmonious all.
Ah me ! from real happiness we stray,
By vice bewilder'd ; vice which always leads,
However fair at first, to wilds of woe.

Egis. Ah ! Clytemnestra ! didst thou love—
Clytem. No more !

Seduce my soul no more ! Here will I stop—
Beyond this line 'tis misery, 'tis madness.
The furies flash their torches, vultures tear,
The mingled tortures of the damn'd await me.
Oh ! if your passion be not merely selfish,
If the least tenderness for me you feel,
Drive me no farther down the gulf of woe !
To happiness I bid a last farewell ;
I ask not happiness : no, that I leave
To innocence and virtue ; peace, alone,
Some poor remains of peace is all I ask,
Not to be greatly wretched, plunged in horrors !
And yet who knows, the heavenly spark, that
sleeps

Beneath these embers, yet may spread anew
Its cheerful lustre—All may yet be well—
For Agamemnon was so kind, so gentle,
With such a holy tender flame he burn'd,
As might have kindled in a barbarous breast
Humanity and virtue.

Egis. All pretence.
I guess his aim ! I penetrate his purpose.
On you he lavish'd fondness, while on me
He lower'd destruction. Doubtless, with his ear
Some villain has been busy ; and he means
First to divide us, then with greater ease,
To ruin both—And can you then be caught,
Caught with the common prostituted speeches,
That oft have sicken'd on the glowing lip
Of many a Trojan slave ? Chryseis had them ;
Briseis too ; and now Cassandra, she,
Who, more like a triumphant queen than captive,
Is every hour expected—

Clytem. What Cassandra ?
Egis. Oh, it imports you little what Cassandra !
Thus poorly tame you ne'er will want Cassandras.
What is become of Clytemnestra's spirit,
That she can thus forget her high descent,
Forget her rank, her honour, nay forget
Her injuries ?

Clytem. But what Cassandra, say ?
Egis. Why, Priam's daughter ! the prophetic
princess,
The proud, the young, the beautiful Cassandra :
So vain of heart, she dreamt Apollo loved her,
And, on her plighted faith to crown his love,
Bestow'd the gift of prophecy ; the gift
In her possession, she deceived the god ;
Whence he, provoked, with this condition dash'd it,
Of never gaining credit. So the tale,
The fable runs—Yet on my soul, I think,
Did she give out, she would be queen of Argos,
She were indeed a prophetess.

Clytem. 'Tis well.
You mean it for an insult this, you do.
What else could tempt you to deride me, sir,
With such extravagance ?

Egis. Mistake me not,
I mean it, madam, for a serious truth,
I mean it for a certainty, if thus
You droop, unnerved with these dejecting fears.

Clytem. Cassandra queen of Argos !
Egis. Yes, of Argos ;
While Clytemnestra in a prison pines ;
Where she may weep and moralise at leisure.

Clytem. By heavens ! she visits first her father's
shade.
Egis. There shone your native self. Let bright
revenge,
I should say justice, dissipate these clouds,

These melancholy whims of ill-judged virtue,
And show you burning with your former lustre.
Madam, our fates are blended : know, we stand
Or fall together. Shame, contempt, and ruin,
Or safety, love, and glory, is our choice.
And can we doubt a moment ?

Clytem. But Egisthus—
Egis. I know the purpose of thy pleading eye.
Of that hereafter—We shall meet again—
My presence now is wanted in the city.
Fear nothing—Thou shalt know before we act,
Thou for whose sake alone I act and live !

ACT III.

SCENE I.

ARCAS, MELISANDER.

Arcas. AND have I found my long lost friend again?
My Melisander ! But so changed your look,
So sickly with a kind of thoughtful sadness,
So sunk each feature, by seven drooping years
Spent in that desert isle, as baffled quite
My wandering recollection.

Melis. True, dear Arcas :
For what a helpless creature, by himself,
Is the proud lord of this inferior world,
Vain feeble man ! The commoners of nature,
Each wing that flits along the spacious sky,
Is less dependant than their boasting master.

Hail social life ! into thy pleasing bounds
Again I come, to pay the common stock
My share of service ; and, in glad return,
To taste thy comforts, thy protected joys.

Arcas. O greatly welcome ! you deserve them
You well deserve the social life you polish. [well,
Still on my thought your strange delivery dwells.
By Agamemnon left to aid the queen
With faithful counsel, while he warr'd at Troy ;
And thus by Agamemnon to be saved,
Returning from that conquest ! wondrous chance !
Or rather wondrous conduct of the gods !
By mortals, from their blindness, chance misnamed.
Meantime, instruct me, while the king resumes,
How was you snatch'd away ? and how, so long,
Could you this dreadful solitude support ?
I burn to know the whole.

Melis. 'Tis thus, my friend.
While sunk in unsuspecting sleep I lay,
Some midnight ruffians rush'd into my chamber,
Sent by Egisthus, who my presence deem'd
Obstructive (so I solve it) to his views ;
Black views I fear, as you perhaps may know.
Sudden they seized, and muffled up in darkness,
Straight bore me to the sea, whose instant prey
I did conclude myself, when first, around
The ship unmoor'd, I heard the chiding wave.
But these fell tools of cruel power, it seems,
Had orders in a desert isle to leave me ;
There hopeless, helpless, comfortless, to prove
The utmost gall and bitterness of death.
Thus malice often overshoots itself,
And some unguarded accident betrays
The man of blood.—Next night—a dreary night !
Cast on the wildest of the Cyclad Isles,
Where never human foot had mark'd the shore,
These ruffians left me—Yet believe me, Arcas,
Such is the rooted love we bear mankind,
All ruffians as they were, I never heard
A sound so dismal as their parting oars.—
Then horrid silence follow'd, broke alone
By the low murmurs of the restless deep,
Mix'd with the doubtful breeze, that now and then

Sigh'd through the mournful woods. Beneath a
I sat me down, more heavily oppress'd, [shade
More desolate at heart, than e'er I felt
Before ; when Philomela, o'er my head,
Began to tune her melancholy strain,
As piteous of my woes ; till by degrees,
Composing sleep on wounded nature shed
A kind but short relief. At early morn,
Waked by the chaunt of birds, I look'd around
For usual objects : objects found I none,
Except before me stretch'd the toiling main,
And rocks and woods, in savage view, behind.
Wrapt for a moment in amazed confusion,
My thought turn'd giddy round ; when all at once,
To memory full my dire condition rush'd. [void,

Arcas. But of each comfort, each convenience
How could you life sustain ? how fence against
Inclement skies ?

Melis. A mossy cave, that faced
The southern sea, and in whose deep recess
Boil'd up a crystal fountain, was my home.
Herbs were my food, those blessed stores of health !
Only when winter from my daily search
Withdrew my verdant meal, I was obliged
In faithless snares to seize, which truly grieved me,
My sylvan friends ; that ne'er till then had known,
And therefore dreaded less the tyrant man.

But these low hardships scarce deserve regard :
The pangs, that sharpest stung, were in my mind ;
There desolation reign'd ; and there, cut off
From social life, I felt a constant death.
And yet these pangs at last forgot to thro' :
What cannot lenient gentle time perform ?
I ate my lonely meal without a tear ;
Nor sigh'd to see the dreadful night descend.
In my own breast, a world within myself,
In streams, in groves, in sunny hill and shade ;
In all that blooms with vegetable life,
Or joys with kindred animal sensation ;
In the full-peopled round of azure heaven ;
When'er I, studious, look'd, I found companions.
But, chief, the Muses lent their softening aid.
At their enchanting voice my sorrows fled,
Or learn'd to please ; while, through my troubled
They breathed the soul of harmony anew. [heart,
Thus of the great community of nature
A denizen I lived ; and oft, in hymns, [versed,
And rapturous thought, even with the gods con-
That not disdain sometimes the walks of man.

So pass'd the time, when, lo ! within my call,
Arrived the ship, which hope had often promised—
The ship !—Oh, it surpass'd my fondest dream,
E'er to imagine the gay ship that came !
As on the deck I Agamemnon saw,
All glorious with the spoils of conquer'd Troy ;
Ye gods ! what transport, what amazement seized
What adoration of your wondrous ways ! [me!
Expression sinks beneath them.

Arcas. Sweet reward
Of manly patience ! that, to fortune still
Superior, scorns despair.

Melis. This theme, my friend,
Will better suit a leisure hour ; but now
The high concerns of life demand our care.

I have already to the king imparted
Suspensions of Egisthus, and remain
In this disguise, not to alarm his guilt,
Till it more full appear, and proper steps
To punish his misgovernment be taken.
If he has ill designs, you, *Arcas*, you [them.
Must, while you seem'd regardless, have discern'd
Your calm but keen inspection, not disturb'd
By the vain flutter of ill-timed discourse,
Must reach the very bottom of his purpose.
In you the king confides, of you demands,
As of his best-loved subject in Mycenæ,
The truth.

Arcas. Oh, I have precious truths in store !
And that best treasure will unlock before him.
Long has my silent observation traced
Egisthus, through the doubling maze of treason ;
But now his ill designs are too, too plain,
To all Mycenæ plain ; and who, indeed,
Who can have good ones that corrupts a people ?

It was however, hard, a bitter task !
To wink at public villany ; to wipe
Each honest passion from my livid face,
To bind my hands, and seal my quivering lips,
While my heart burn'd with rage, and treasured
A storm of indignation— [up

Melis. Give it way !
Oh, 'tis a glorious luxury ! Oppress'd,
For years beneath a load of wicked power,
To heave it off indignant, and assert
The dear, dear freedom of a virtuous mind.
Curse on the coward or perfidious tongue,
That dares not, even to kings, avow the truth !
Let traitors wrap them in delusive incense,
On flattery flattery heap, on falsehood falsehood :
Truth is the living liberal breath of heaven ;
That sweeps these fogs away, with all their vermin.
And on my soul, I think that Agamemnon
Deserves some touch of blame. To put the power,
The power of blessing or oppressing millions,
Of doing or great good or equal mischief,
Even into doubtful hands, is worse than careless.
Ye gods, avert the miseries that hence
On him and on his family may fall !
But, see, the king.

SCENE II.

AGAMEMNON, MELISANDER, ARCAS.

Agam. Nay, *Arcas*, to my bosom,
[*Arcas kneeling.*

Come, let me proudly take a faithful heart !

Arcas. Thrice welcome, sir, to Argos and
To virtue welcome ! [Mycenæ !

Agam. In my own dominions
I am a stranger, *Arcas*. Ten full years,
Or even one day, is absence for a king,
Without some mighty reason, much too long.
For me a just and memorable war,
Whose actions future times perhaps may sing,
My own, my brother's, and my people's honour,
With that of common Greece, must plead my pardon.

Now shall my cares attend the works of peace :
Calm deeds that glare not on the vulgar eye ;
And yet it equal courage oft demands,
To quell injustice, riot, factious rage,
Dark-working blind cabal and bold disorder,
As to confront the rigid face of war.
Then tell me, *Arcas*, for, till self-inform'd,
I mean to see with your discerning eyes,
And sure I am they never will mislead me,
Have I much subject for this peaceful courage ?
This fortitude of state ?

Arcas. Too much, my lord.
Would to the gods, our virtues, here at home,
Could answer your heroic deeds abroad !
You, doubtless, from the rugged school of war,
Have brought sound manly hearts, and generous
spirits :

While we, alas ! we rot in weedy peace,
In slothful riot, luxury, profusion,
And every meanness to repair that waste—
I see the noble blood, indignant, mount,
At this relation, to my sovereign's cheek :
But as affairs now press, I were a traitor,
If with a sparing tongue I spoke the truth.

Agam. Immortal gods ! have I, these ten long
Sustain'd a war at Troy ; fill'd every day [years,
With cares incessant, councils, dangers, toils,
To cherish villains in licentious ease ?
Have I thus squander'd vile, on Phrygian plains,
The bravest blood of Greece to shelter such ;
And to assert their honour who have none ?
But what can this perfidious, this Egisthus,
What can he, say, by such loose rule propose ?
Is it his native bent ? or does he push
Some dark design, by these detested means ?

Arcas. There is no vice a stranger to his heart,
Conceal'd beneath refined dissimulation ;
Dissimulation, that on you yourself
Imposed. Meantime, sir, his outrageous views
Invade the throne of Argos and Mycenæ.

Agam. Said you the throne of Argos and Mycenæ ?
Already have I lost my noblest throne,
If he has robb'd me of my people's virtue ;
'Tis but vain pomp, a tyrant's toy, the other.
And dares he bear a giddy look so high,
As to my throne ? The villain ! sure he dares not !

Arcas. Nay, more, my lord—he scales the daz-
zling height,
And almost grasps with impious hands your sceptre.

Agam. To touch it is perdition !—What ! Egis-
thus seize my throne ! [thus !

Arcas. So means the traitor.
Agam. That creature of my power ! that insect !
raised

By the warm beams of my mistaken bounty !
Whom, when my father's vengeance razed his race,
I saved, train'd up, with favours, honours heap'd ;
And trusted in his hands at last a jewel,
Too precious for the faithless heart of man—
O gross, gross blindness !—Half my kingly power !
Ay, there breaks out his father's treacherous
blood !

There, there, too late, I find the base Thyestes !
Forgive me, *Atræus* ! O my royal father !
Forgive my trusting thus the seed of him,
Of an abhorr'd, an execrable brother,
Who even profaned thy bed—But, ere you orb
Shall from the purple ocean rise again,
O injured *Atræus* ! by thy sacred shade
I swear, to make for this a full atonement.

Is then this people, Arcas, grown so vile,
So very vile, that he dares entertain
The smallest hope to rival me in empire?
I like not vaunting.—But, ungrateful people!
Can you prefer a nameless thing to me?
Am I not rough with scars on your account?
And for the careful love I always bore you,
Your father named? And yet prefer to me,
One who ne'er saw the glorious front of war,
For nothing famous but corrupting peace,
And whose sole merit was my ill-judged favour?
Can you?—Away!—Dishonour stains the thought!
How should this be?

Arcas. Not many, sir, stand fix'd
On the deep principles of reason'd virtue,
Whom time nor steals, nor passion bears away.
Mankind, in general, float along the stream
Of custom, good or bad; and oft the mind
To that familiar grows, by gradual use
And still-encroaching vice, whose first regard
Gave horror. Hence ten loosely-govern'd years
Have wrought such strange events, that you no
Behold your ancient Argos and Mycenæ. [more
These cities now with slaves and villains swarm.
At first, Egisthus, popular and fair,
All smiles and softness, as if each man's friend,
By hidden ways proceeded, mining virtue:
He pride, he pomp, he luxury diffused;
He taught them wants, beyond their private means:
And straight, in bounty's pleasing chains involved,
They grew his slaves. Who cannot live on little,
Or as his various fortunes shall permit,
Stands in the market, ready to be sold.

Agam. Oh, damn'd detested traffic!—But proceed.

Arcas. While the luxurious fever thus increased,
Still, in proportion as it gather'd rage,
He lent it fuel: and, more bold, disclosed
His noon-day treason. Murmurs went about,
And spread at last into the common talk,
That you was proud, severe, beneath the notion
Of holding firm the helm of state, a tyrant;
That in vain wars, which nought imported them,
You spent their treasure, shed their noblest blood;
And that, Troy conquer'd once, to her rich plains
You meant from Argos to transplant your empire.

Meantime, in private, all, whom wild debauch
Has set adrift from every human tie;
Whom riot, want, and conscious guilt inflame,
Holding the gods and virtue in contempt,
Amidst their bowls; such are his bosom-friends:
And join'd to them, a meaner ruffian band,
Of villains bold in crimes, whose trade is murder,
Hang in black clouds around him; whence, I fear,
A sudden tempest is prepared to burst.

This, sir, from duty and a faithful zeal,
I plain unfold: nor on my word, alone,
Believe these accusations; clear as day,
I for them will produce the strongest proof.

Agam. I thank thee, Arcas. Truth, though
sometimes clad

In painful lustre, yet is always welcome,
Dear as the light that shows the lurking rock:
'Tis the fair star that, ne'er into the main
Descending, leads us safe through stormy life—
Gods! how it tears me from each calmer thought!
To think this traitor, that this double traitor,
This traitor to myself and to my people,
Should by such sneaking, such unmanly ways,
Thus filch away my crown!—
Why stand I chafing here? One timely deed

Is worth ten thousand words—Come then, my
friends,

Come and behold me seize amidst his guards,
His coward guards—guilt ever was a coward—
This rival king, and with him crown my triumph.
Till then Troy smokes in vain, and Agamemnon
Cannot be said to conquer.

Melis.

Sir, beware—

Agam. Of what beware? Where am I, Meli-
Am I not in Mycenæ? in my palace? [sander?
Are not these crowds, that stream along the streets,
My subjects all? Of what should I beware?
Not seize a traitor in my own dominions!
Yes, I will seize him, Melisander,—will! [gives!

Melis. What grace to kings such generous ardour
But though brave deeds be warm at first conceived,
Let the best purpose cool, nor miss your blow.
More firm and sure the hand of courage strikes,
When it obeys the watchful eye of caution.
You hear from Arcas, sir, what ruffian bands,
What secret deaths, what daggers lurk around him:
Be cautious then; for virtue's, glory's sake!
And, when you strike, strike home.

Agam.

O for those Greeks!

That this rude day are tossing on the seas;
Those hardy Greeks, whom ten years' war has
steel'd;

With toils, with dangers, and with death familiar:
Then should you see what chaff before the wind
Are these weak sons of soft enfeebling peace,
These wretches, only bold where unresisted.

Melis. But since, my lord, you cannot now exert
This nobler force, let prudence take its place.
Have patience only, till you safely can,
And surely, seize him.

Agam.

Well, till then I will.

And, though not made of patient mould, in this
I will have patience, will, some tedious hours,
Repress my vengeance— [Pausing.

Yes, I like the thought—

He may be seized this evening at the banquet,
Be there surprised with ease—and shall I—
For, by the eternal gods that rule mankind!
The sleep of death alone shall seal these eyes,
While such a wretch holds power in my dominions.

Oh Clytemnestra! to the public, now,
Succeeds the private pang.—At thought of thee,
New rage, new vengeance shake my inmost soul!
Was my beloved, my queen, my Clytemnestra,
So long abandon'd in a villain's power,
Who knows, it seems, no limits, owns no laws,
Save those one vice imposes on another?
And now the secret cause, I fear, is plain,
Of that unusual damp, that strange dejection,
Which clouded her at meeting. Still the more
I pour'd my fondness, still the more distress'd
She seem'd; and, turning from my tender gaze,
The copious shower stole down her troubled cheek;
As if she pitied those my blind endearments,
And in her breast some horrid secret swell'd—
Should it be so—Confusion!—Can I stoop
Even to suppose it!—How from slight mistakes
Great evils spring! But the most fruitful source
Of every evil—O that I, in thunder,
Could sound it o'er the listening earth to kings—
Is delegated power to wicked hands.

Melis. My lord, let no suspicions of the queen
E'er taint your bosom: if I judge aright—

Agam. No, Melisander, no; I am not jealous;
In me that passion and contempt were one;

No, 'tis her situation gives me horror,
Her dreadful situation !—But of this
Enough.—Then tell me, Arcas, tell me truly ;
Are there a few, say, do there yet remain
A faithful few ! to save the sinking state ?
Can you, ere night, collect an honest band,
A band of such as worthy are to rescue
Their king and country from impending fate ?
Ah ! little thought I, that amidst my subjects,
Embosom'd sweet in peace, I, like a tyrant,
Should e'er have needed guards.

Arcas. Yes, sir, I know
A band of generous youths, whom native virtue,
Unbroken yet by avarice or profusion,
Fits for our purpose : These I can collect—
Agam. About it quickly, Arcas ; lose no time :
Go, bring me to the banquet those brave youths :
I long for their acquaintance. Till that hour,
Domestic cares and joys demand my presence :
The father's heart now bears me to my children.
Farewell ! My all depends upon your conduct.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

AGAMEMNON, MELISANDER.

Agam. DOMESTIC pleasures spread their charms
in vain—

O for the hour of vengeance ! I, till then,
But stalk about, the shadow of a king.
Heard you from Arcas aught ?

Melis. Be patient, sir.
As yet the time permits not his return.
Arcas is zealous, ardent in your service,
And will not fail his duty.

Enter an Officer belonging to the Court.

Off. Sir, Cassandra
Is just arrived.

Agam. Conduct the princess hither.
This Priam's fairest daughter, Melisander,
Is a young princess of engaging beauty,
Raised by distress, of noble sense and spirit ;
But, by poetic visions led astray,
She dreamt Apollo loved her, and the gift
Of prophecy bestow'd, to gain her promise :
The gift once hers, the chastely-faithless maid
Deceived the god ; who therefore, in revenge,
Since he could not recal it, made it useless,
For ever doom'd to meet with disregard.
E'er since the lovely visionary raves
With dignity ; foretels the fate of nations ;
And, judging of the future from the past,
Has oft been wondrous happy in her guesses.
Some strange, some recent instances of this,
Confirm her in her venerable madness.

Melis. Be not too rash in judging, Agamemnon ;
For we, blind mortals, but a little know
Of boundless nature—Hark ! the princess comes ;
I hear her voice, I hear the voice of sorrow.

SCENE II.

AGAMEMNON, MELISANDER, CASSANDRA, attended by Trojan Captives.

Cass. (entering). O hostile roofs ! O Ilium ! O
my country !

Agam. I cannot blame your grief, unhappy princess,

But, if it can relieve you, here be sure
Of an asylum, safe as Priam's palace.

Cass. O sweet abode ! O palace of my fathers !
My bleeding heart melts while I think of thee ;
Think of the days of innocence and joy,

That shone upon me there. How changed art thou !
Ah ! what a scene, when I beheld thee last !
Rage, blood, and flames, and shrieks of murder
round me !

The sword of Pyrrhus, and a feeble father !
Where was your Hector then ? Where all his sons ?
O Priam's numerous race ! what are you now
Become ? Ah me, the desolating gods
Have laid their hands, their iron hands, upon us.

Agam. From past misfortunes, princess, turn
your eye—

Cass. 'Tis true, the future may full well suffice.
The avenging sisters trace my footsteps still,
The hunters still pursue the trembling doe.
Where am I ?—Gods !—Black heavy drops of blood
Run down the guilty walls—With the dun shades
Of night ascending, lo ! successive troops
Of Trojan ghosts are flocking to the banquet :
Permitted by the infernal gods, they come,
To feast them with the horrors of this night,
To snuff the blood of victims—Ha ! the car,
The gay triumphal car, is turn'd, at once,
Into a mournful bier, that nods along,
Solemn and slow—Yes, Troy shall be avenged :
I shall the vengeance see ; and yet not see
Thy light, returning Phoebus.

Agam. Fair Cassandra,
Indulge no more these melancholy views,
These visions form'd by gloomy-minded grief.
We will each art, each tender art employ,
To soothe your sorrows, to restore your peace.
You come not to the proud unfeeling race
Of yesterday : we know the turns of fortune ;
Have drunk the cup, the wholesome cup of suffer-
That not inflames but moderates the mind. [ings,
Then fear not, princess ; let me call you daughter !
Your treatment shall be such as well becomes
The dignity of woe, becomes the great,
The fair unhappy. Nought shall touch your honour.
I know, I feel your beauty : but here dwell
The gods of hospitality and faith ;
The hymeneal powers are honour'd here.
Yes, I will shield thee, equal with Electra,
With my loved daughter in thy friendship blest.

Cass. In spite of swelling tears that choke the
Of bitter tears by big remembrance shed, [way,
I own thy goodness, thank thee, Agamemnon.
Meantime, in vain are all thy generous cares,
On my account. The gods of death will, soon,
Extend o'er me their all-protecting wing.
I shall not long, I shall not want protection ;
But who, devoted prince, will give it thee ?
Even while we talk the secret wheels are turning,

That lift the vile, and lay the mighty low.
I pity thee, the house of Pelops pity :
Forgive me, Troy : I pity thy destroyers.

Enter an Officer.

Off. A messenger from Arcas, sir——
Agam. 'Tis well.
To my apartment lead him—you meanwhile
[*To MELISANDER.*
Attend the princess ; grace her with such honours,
As suits her to receive, and me to give.

SCENE III.

CASSANDRA, CHORUS of Trojan Captives, MELISANDER.

Melis. Fair princess, stop these tears. Exert
that best,
That noblest virtue, which can master fortune—
An equal mind.

Cass. Not for myself I weep?——
But, oh, my dear companions ! How for you
My bosom yearns !

Cho. We have together lived !
Together let us die !

Cass. Together lived !
At this ten thousand images awake ;
Ten thousand little tendernesses throb.

Cho. O days of youth ! O careless days ! Untaught
To weep, if love shed not the pleasing tear.

Cass. O woods ! O fountains ! O delightful meads !
That lent us flowers, the prime of blooming May,
To deck our tresses.

Cho. O the yellow banks
Of fair Scamander ! in whose silver stream
We used to bathe, beneath the secret shade.

Cass. O cheerful Ida's airy summits ! where
The gods delight to dwell.

Cho. O silent Troy !
Whose streets have often echo'd with our song.

Cass. O the lost labours of a ruin'd people !
O country ! freedom ! friends ! relations ! All,
That gives or taste or dignity to life,
All, all is gone, beyond recovery gone !

Cho. Then let us die !

Cass. For me, the hunted hart
More fervent pants not for the cooling stream,
Than I to wrap me in the quiet shades
Of death. But ah ! my helpless friends, for you
I feel its keenest anguish.

Cho. Not for us,
Feel not for us. What comfort have we left ?
What hope, what wish in life !—One healing pang,
And then we weep no more.

Cass. Refreshing thought !
And then from bondage, pain, from every ill,
For ever free, we meet our friends again ;
Our parents, brothers, sisters, lovers meet.

Cho. Then let us die ! and sudden be the blow !
Cass. The gods assent.—Behold the happy shore !
But, ah ! there lies a stormy sea betwixt !

Melis. So sings the plaining nightingale her woes.
Cass. Ah, far unlike the nightingale !—She sings,
Unceasing, through the balmy nights of May ;
She sings from love and joy, while we, alas !—

Melis. Behold the queen.—Deep-wrapt in
thought she seems—
Cass. Oh, direful musings !—Lead us from her
presence.

SCENE IV.

Clyt. Sweet peace of mind ! whence pleasure
borrows taste,
Daughter of virtue ! whither art thou fled ?
To what calm cottage, to what blameless shade,
Far from these guilty walls ? O walls ! O race !
To horrors doom'd !—Before me gathers fast
A deepening gloom, with unknown terrors big.—
Not quite unknown.—Gods ! what a dreadful hint
Flash'd from Egisthus, when I saw him last !
And to what desperate actions cannot safety,
Ambition, love, and vengeance drive the soul !—
Distraction lies that way—yet, how escape ?
Shame urges on behind, unpitied shame,
That worst of furies, whose fell aspect frights
Each tender feeling from the human breast.
Goodness itself even turns in me to gall,
And only serves to heighten my despair.
How kind was Agamemnon ! generous ! fond !
How more than usual mild ! As if, on purpose,
To give these tortures their severest sting.
Happy ! compared to this tormented state,
Where honour only lives with inward lash,
To punish guilt, happy the harden'd wretch,
Who feels no conscience, and who fears no crime !—
Oh, horrid ! horrid ! Oh, flagitious thought !
How is it with the mind that can endure
A thought so dire !—My sole remaining hope
Is death, kind death, that amiable sleep
Which wakes no more,—at least to mortal care—
But then the dark hereafter that may come.—
There is no anchor that against this storm,
This mighty sea of doubts and fears, can hold.
Hopeless, I drive.—One thought destroys another.—
This stranger too !—Should it be Melisander—
Is there a fear, however idle, wild,
And even almost impossible, which guilt,
The feeble-hearted guilt not entertains ?
I order'd his attendance.—See, he comes.

SCENE V.

CLYTEMNESTRA, MELISANDER.

Clyt. Stranger, are you not he, whom Agamem-
By an amazing chance, in his return, [non,
Saved from a desert isle ?

Melis. Madam, the same.

Clyt. I much admire your fortunate deliverance,
And wish to hear your story : why there left,
And how sustain'd. Indulge me with it, stranger.

Melis. Madam, I come this moment from the
king,
Charged with a matter which requires dispatch :
But, that transacted once, without delay,
I will attend your orders.

Clyt. Then it seems,
You are not quite a stranger in Mycenæ.
What is your country ?

Melis. Greece.

Clyt. What part of Greece ?

Melis. At Athens I was born.

Clyt. But in Mycenæ,
Have you not in Mycenæ been before ?

Melis. There are not, madam, many parts of
To me unknown. [Greece

Clyt. Why thus avoid my question?—
Have you been here before?

Melis. Madam, I have.

Clyt. Here in this palace?—Ha! why stand you silent?

You keep your eyes unmoved upon the ground.
What should this mean? Beneath that rough disguise
There lurks, methinks, a form which somewhere I
Have seen.

Melis. The dream of fancy, that, the more
It is indulged, perplexes still the more.
I tarry here too long; the king's commands
Admit of no delay.

Clyt. 'Tis so! 'tis so!
Air, features, manners, voice, this studied haste,
The shifts of one unpractised in deceit,
All, all conspire—One image wakes another,
And thick they flash upon me!

Melis. You grow pale,
You tremble, madam; that mistake, I find,
Concerning me turns wilder and disturbs you.
Let me retire—

Clyt. A moment—stay—

Melis. In vain,
I find it is in vain to wrap me longer
In these evasions.

Clyt. Melisander!

Melis. Madam—

Clyt. And can it be? Behold I then the man,
Whom I so long have number'd with the dead?
Almighty gods! Behold I Melisander?
But, ha! how changed! how darken'd with sus-
Yes, I am deem'd the author of his woes. [picion!]

Melis. Madam, forgive—

Clyt. Why else from me conceal
Your wish'd return?—I plainly am distrust'd—
By Agamemnon too—It was unkind,
Unjust, unfriendly; shocks me, Melisander.

Melis. Indeed you wrong me, madam, wrong
me much,

To judge me apt or to conceive or spread
Distrust. I would have perish'd by myself,
Unknown, unwept, in helpless solitude,
Rather than here return to this full world,
To set my mistress and her lord at variance.
Oh, think me not a busy peace-destroyer!
Accursed is the wretch, to social life
The most inhuman foe, who in the nice,
The tender scenes of life, dares rashly meddle,
And sow division between friends and lovers.

Clyt. The generous heart is ever slow to blame;
But Melisander, not to me were owing,
Not in the least to me, those cruel woes,
This worse than death, which you so long have
suffer'd.

Instead of that, your fate, how, whither gone,
If carried off, or secretly destroy'd,
Was all a mournful mystery to me,
Dark as the night on which you disappear'd.
Did you but know, here in my secret soul,
What undissembled pangs your absence roused;
What I have felt for you, and for myself,
In losing such a wise and faithful friend;—
Knew you but these—oh, knew you, Melisander,
How your disaster has been truly mine,
You never could suspect me.

Melis. Witness, Heaven!

I never did—Your heart I know disdains
A thought that looks like cruelty or fraud.
From the first moment that his ruffians seized me,
I had no doubt, I knew it was Egisthus.
Some time before, I mark'd the rising storm,
And meant to warn you; but it sudden burst,
And bore me far away, far from all means,
Even from all hope of lending you assistance.
Ay! there I suffer'd most. My fears for you,
At once by guile and violence beset,
Took off the point of my own proper woes.
But when your awful virtues struck my thought,
Your wisdom, spirit, resolution, truth;
That dread effulgence of the spotless soul,
Which smites the hardest villain into shame;
My fears appear'd impertinent and vain.
Yet doubtless, madam, you have had occasion
For a firm-ruling hand and watchful eye,
For every virtue; and I truly joy,
That Agamemnon finds at his return
Egisthus by your conduct thus restrain'd.

Clyt. By heavens! he tries me.—Oh, suspicious
guilt! *[Aside.]*

Your words are friendly, but your deeds are doubtful.
No Melisander, friendship with distrust
Can never dwell. And that I am distrusted
To me is certain—In a matter too,
That much concern'd my peace, concern'd my
honour.

For did you even ascribe your woes to me,
You could not manage with more distant caution.

Melis. Whence is it that the noble Clytemnestra,
Who used to shine in a superior sphere
Of fair serenity and candid peace,
Should to these doubts descend, these dark sus-
picious?

For me, I here attest the gods, my soul
Ne'er knew a thought, that swell'd not with esteem,
With love and veneration of your virtues.
And for the king, no young enraptured lover,
In all the first effusions of his soul,
New to the mighty charm; no friend, who meets,
After long years of dark and silent absence,
His happy friend again, feels livelier joy,
Than Agamemnon feels, while his glad tongue
Runs out in endless praise of Clytemnestra—
But I must wait his orders.

Clyt. Do your duty.
I too must go, must to Egisthus straight *[Aside.]*
Impart this dreadful news.

SCENE VI.

Melis. (alone.) She went abruptly—
And as we talk'd, methought, strange passions shook
Her inward frame, and darken'd every feature.

Behold the black, the guilt-concealing night
Fast closes round. Wide, through this ample palace,
The lamps begin to shine. The tempest falls;
The weary winds sink, breathless. But, who knows,
What fiercer tempest yet may shake this night!
Soul-cheering Phoebus, with thy sacred beams
O quickly come, and chase these sullen shadows!

ACT V.

SCENE I.

CLYTEMNESTRA, EGISTHUS.

Egis. AH Clytemnestra! what a change is here!
And must I then thus steal an interview?
Are we alone?

Clyt. You fright me with that question:
You look astonish'd.

Egis. On the brink of ruin
We, tottering, stand.

Clyt. That is no news to me.

Egis. But——

Clyt. What?

Egis. We are discover'd.

Clyt. Ha! discover'd!

Egis. Yes, certainly discover'd. Arcas now,
By Agamemnon's orders, in the city
Collects a band to seize me at the banquet,
A short hour hence. And my accusers, madam,
You may be well assured, are not your friends.

Clyt. 'Tis plain! 'tis plain!—The parting fogs
disperse:

And now the doubtful scene stands all reveal'd—
Who could have thought they should dissemble thus?
But I can tell you more.

Egis. What, madam? speak;
For danger presses on us.

Clyt. Saw you him,
This seeming stranger, saved by Agamemnon?

Egis. Arcas and he to-day, my friends inform me,
Were busy with the king; and, doubtless, then,
It was concerted that I should be seized.

Clyt. Ah! did you know, Egisthus, who he is!—
Egis. Who?

Clyt. Melisander.

Egis. Gods! and does he live?
For my confusion, saved! Oh, gross, gross folly!
To do an action of that kind by halves.

Had he been silent dust—To please you, madam,
From a false tenderness for you, he lives——

Clyt. A mighty merit! glorious boast indeed!
Hear him, ye gracious gentle powers of love!
From tenderness for me, he did not murder
A worthy blameless man, who never hurt him;
He murder'd not my friend, my faithful friend.
Ah! 'tis such tenderness, that makes me wretched;
Such tenderness, that still in blacker guilt,
In the last depth of misery will plunge me.

Egis. It is not, madam, now a time for this.
Think of our situation: close beset
By all those ills which mortals most abhor,
Whom have we to confide in but each other?
And this sad meeting is perhaps our last.
Concord alone, and vigorous measures, can
Prevent our ruin—But from Melisander
What did you learn? Are you yourself suspected?

Clyt. I cannot find I am:—And yet I must.

Egis. But as for me, my ruin is no secret.

Clyt. 'Tis true, some dark attempt goes on
against you.

Egis. Then have I rightly done.

Clyt. What have you done?

Egis. What prudence, justice, love, and ven-
geance, all
Demand——

Clyt. Immortal Powers! you have not?—

Egis. No:

But must, and will—What else can you propose?

Clyt. Oh, anything besides! immediate flight,
Eternal absence, death!——

Egis. Let others die!

Let the proud, faithless, false, injurious tyrant;
The hero glorious in his daughter's murder;
The scourge of Greece, who has, from wild ambition,
Shed so much blood—let Agamemnon die!

Clyt. Oh, heavens and earth! you shock me to
distraction!

I have, Egisthus, hitherto avoided
This dreadful point, still hoping you might drop
Your horrid resolution: now I tell you,
Before the listening gods, I plainly tell you,
That Agamemnon shall not fall unwarn'd:
You shall not rise by me into his throne:
I will not be the tool of your ambition;
Will not be wretched, infamous for ever,
The blush of women, the disgrace of nature!
That you may gain your execrable views,
Mask'd under smooth pretences.—I am guilty;
Alas, I am—But think not, therefore, tyrant!
To give me law. There are degrees in guilt;
And I have still my reason left, have left
Some resolution, some remains of virtue:
Yes, I dare die; and who dares die, Egisthus,
Needs not be driven to villainous extremes!
Mark me, insulting man!—My certain cure
Of every woe, my cordial draught is ready;
And if you do not promise me, here swear
To drop your fell designs on Agamemnon,
To quit this palace—You may still escape—
And never see me more; I go, I go
This moment, to discover all and die!

Egis. What! Clytemnestra!

Clyt. Nothing shall dissuade me.

I will not argue more—Say, only say,
Must I betake me to this cruel refuge?
This dire necessity?

Egis. Permit me, madam;
Hear me but once, and then pursue your purpose.

Suppose us guilty, what you will;—yet, madam,
Shall we acknowledge and proclaim that guilt?
Shall we, by patient waiting for our doom,
By pitiful neglect of self-defence,
Unheard-of meanness! stamp it into shame?
No; let us wipe it out with bold success.
It is success that colours all in life:
Success makes fools admired, makes villains honest;
All the proud virtue of this vaunting world
Fawns on success and power, howe'er acquired.

If then, supposing guilt, it were a meanness
To stoop to shame, can words express the madness
Of stopping short, with infamy and ruin,
When justice, love and vengeance, urge to glory?

Instead of being deem'd a generous queen,
The brave avenger of her sex's honour,
Famed for her spirit, for her just resentment ;
Who greatly punish'd a perfidious husband,
A cruel tyrant ; one, who from his bed,
His throne, proposed, with open shame to turn her,
And to her place to take his country's foe,
To take a Trojan captive, proud Cassandra :
Instead of such renown, can Clytemnestra—
Forgive the doubt—can she submit to pass,
Through future times, for an abandon'd woman ?
A feeble, spiritless, abandon'd woman !—
Nay, madam, hear the truth, what now I tell you
Must, in a little scanty hour, take place :
In a few moments, you must be the first
Or last of women ; be the public scorn,
Or admiration of approving Greece—
You know you must—be Agamemnon's slave,
Cassandra's slave, or nobly punish both,
And reign with me in happiness and glory.

Consult your heart ; can you resolve on shame ?
On voluntary shame ? That only ill
The generous fear, which kills the soul itself.
Were those fair features, full of lovely grandeur,
Form'd for confusion ? That majestic front,
To be bow'd down with infamy and vileness ?
Ah ! can you bear contempt ? The venom'd tongue
Of those whom ruin pleases ? The keen sneer,
The lewd reproaches of the rascal herd ;
Who, for the self-same actions, if successful,
Would be as grossly lavish in your praise ?—
To sum up all in one—Can you support
The scornful glances, the malignant joy,
Or more detested pity of a rival ?
Of a triumphant rival ?—No ; you cannot.
That conscious worth, which kindles in your eye,
Tells me you cannot.—

But in vain disputes
No more to squander these important moments :
Know, that I have not, to the frail decision
Of wavering fear and female weakness, left
Our freedom, safety, happiness and honour.
Even in your own despite you shall be saved.
And could you be so lost to reason, wild,
To do what woman never did before,
What shocks humanity, accuse yourself ;
You only court dishonour to no purpose :
For Agamemnon now cannot escape ;
I am already master of this palace ;
All is prepared, my people all are fix'd,
All properly disposed ; and here I swear,
By sacred justice, glory, love, and vengeance !
He dies !—dies in the bath, before the banquet !—
And with him dies Cassandra, she, who dares,
In her presumptuous thought, usurp thy honours.

She weeps !—O my adored ! my Clytemnestra !
Forgive this barbarous necessary truth !
Did I not love thee, love thee more than empire,
Than life and glory, would I thus disclose
These dangerous secrets ? Could I not have veil'd,
And with more certain caution, gain'd my pur-
pose ?

Clyt. O that you had, Egisthus ! then, alas !
I should have fondly thought myself less guilty.

Egis. I lose myself in softness, while the time,
With danger big, demands intrepid deeds.
Wipe off these tears—When next we meet again,
All will be well.

SCENE II.

Clyt. (alone.) Ah ! when we meet again !—
I stand at last convinced, and must dissemble—
Yet how dissemble ? Painted in my face,
Are the full horrors of this bloody deed.—

But who are these approaching ?—Ha !—Cas-
sandra !

How fair she seems ! how lovely ! hateful charms !
That well may rival mine, decay'd and sunk
By guilt and sorrow—She possess my bed !
Possess my sceptre !—This restores my spirit ;—
I am abused ! too patient !—Perish all !
Perish myself, Egisthus, Agamemnon !
So this proud rival, this Cassandra perish !

SCENE III.

CASSANDRA, Trojan Captives, MELISANDER.

Melis. Daughters of Ilium ! By the king's com-
mand,

I come to ask your presence at the banquet.
Till then allow me to partake your woes :
I have a reverence for them. I myself, [fortune ;
Thanks to the gracious gods ! have known mis-
I am with grief acquainted ; therefore can
For others feel. Sweet source of every virtue,
O sacred sorrow ! he who knows not thee,
Knows not the best emotions of the heart,
Those tender tears that humanise the soul,
The sigh that charms, the pang that gives delight ;
He dwells too near to cruelty and pride,
And is a novice in the school of virtue. [pity.

Cass. We thank thee, stranger, for thy generous
Heaven has, it seems, throughout diffused the good.
May the kind gods, the hospitable powers,
For this befriend thee ! Thou must wander still,
Wilt their protection want.—But Agamemnon !
Where is the king ?

Melis. He bathes him for the banquet,
The banquet earn'd by ten years' war and toil.

Cass. Short-sighted man ! to dream of festal joy,
When his next banquet is perhaps with Pluto.

He comes ! the god comes rushing on my soul !
O gently soothe me with the voice of music !
Assuage my pangs with harmony !—Methinks,
I hear Apollo's lyre.

Melis. Mysterious Powers !

Cass. 'Tis gone—And now harsh discord takes
its place :

Dire yellings now affright my trembling ear !
What means this uproar of the howling forest ?
The lioness and wolf, together leagued,
Pursue the lion's life.—Behold ! the snare,
The infernal snare is set, spread by the stream,
Where, unsuspecting harm, he bathes at noon.
Soon will these guiltless waters blush with blood.
Melis. There is a sort of gloomy light in this,
That flashes horror on me.

Cass. A black swarm
Of fell ideas seize my fancy.—Hence !
O snatch me from this palace ! shambles rather !
It smells of carnage ; breathes a hideous steam,
As if from gaping sepulchres exhaled.
And lo ! the spotless loves, the sports, the joys,
The weeping Lares fly : while in their place,
The vices all, the raging furies come ;

And with them Comus, the flush'd god of banquets,
Besmear'd with gore. They sing the funeral hymn—
What do I see ? what mean these mangled forms ?
These pale, these nightly phantoms ; such as rise,
To working fancy's eye, in troubled dreams ?—
See ! where they sit for ever at the gates,
Demanding vengeance—Vengeance is at hand—
Ha ! 'tis the murder'd boys, whose limbs were here,
Served up to their own sire, to be devour'd !—

Melis. She wakes my dread—the story of Thyestes !

Cass. With this devoted race involved I fall :
Nor falls the slave alone—The master falls.
But man shall die for man, for woman woman :
Remember this.

Melis. The slave, the master fall !

Cass. Ah, bosom-traitress ! Ill-persuaded queen !
And canst thou then the barbarous secret keep ?—

Melis. What queen ? what secret ? Speak more
plain, Cassandra !

Cass. From guilt, in vain, to greater guilt you
From crime to crime precipitated—No ! [fly,
The wicked find no peace—Distraction waits thee !—
One effort more—Yes, save thy lord, and die—
That throe belonged to virtue—Cannot then
The gentle powers prevail ?—A moment yet,
The doubtful balance yet allows a moment—
Down, down it goes, for vengeance and for Troy !
But, ah ! such vengeance, as even foes themselves
Abhor to see !

Melis. She staggers all my reason.

Unveil these dreadful oracles—Perhaps—

Cass. Yes, in a moment, they will be too plain.
The moment comes ! The furies lash it on !
Ha ! Now !

Melis. Unusual horror creeps—

Cass. Alas !

Keep from the murderous sacrificer's hand,
O keep the victim bull ! Lo ! seized, he spurns,
He foams in vain—Behold the lifted blow !
Behold the thirsty steel !—They strike him !—
Hark !

What dismal echoes run from room to room !

Melis. I heard a distant noise !—

[The noise of AGAMEMNON'S assassination heard
indistinctly, and at a distance, behind the scenes.]

Cass. Again !—They strive,
The assassins labour who shall wound him most.
'Tis done !—He falls !—

[The noise heard distinctly, and near.]

Agam. (behind the Scenes.) Off ! villains ! cowards !
By villains murder'd !—Oh ! [off !—

Melis. Great gods ! the king !

SCENE IV.

MELISANDER, CASSANDRA, Trojan Captives, ELECTRA,
ORESTES.

Elec. Stop, generous stranger ! Agamemnon's
friend !

Melis. What would Electra ? what with Meli-

Elec. Heavens ! Melisander ! [sander ?

Melis. To the king's assistance

I fly ; detain me not.

Elec. He is no more !—

Melis. Ha ! dead !

Elec. Yes, murder'd by Egisthus ! dead !

Pierced with a thousand wounds ! O horror ! horror !

We have not time for grief—Orestes—Quick !

Fly ! save my brother !

Orest. Leave my father !—No !
It is but once that I have ever seen him,
Shall I no more ?

Elec. But to revenge his death,
O fly, Orestes, for that glorious purpose !
Tremendous gods ! Methinks, I see his ghost,
That beckons you away !

Orest. I come ! I come !
On, Melisander—

Elec. Brother !

Orest. Oh, my sister !
What will become of thee ?

Elec. Good Melisander,
O guard my brother ! save our only hope !—
I heard a noise—Farewell !

Orest. (going.) Ah ! poor Electra !

SCENE V.

ELECTRA, CASSANDRA, Trojan Captives.

Elec. The murderers come ! stain'd with my
father's blood !
Hide me, Cassandra, hide me from a sight
I cannot bear, a scene to nature shocking !

SCENE VI.

The back-scene opening discovers, at a distance, AGAMEMNON'S body. ELECTRA throws herself by it.

CASSANDRA, Trojan Captives, EGISTHUS with some of his party.

Egis. Enough, my friends ! How low, how silent,
The mighty boaster lies !—Another blow [now,
Crowns my revenge.—

Cass. It shall not, base assassin !
The gods are just ; amidst the crimes of men,
Are firmly just, supremely wise and good :
The gods are here, in all their terrors present !
See where in dreadful majesty they sit !
And write thy doom in Agamemnon's blood !

Egis. Think not to shake me with these gloomy
fables :

This arm that has acquired, shall guard my power ;
And since I now enjoy my long-wish'd vengeance,
All here is calm and cheerful.

Cass. The false boast
Of agonizing guilt ! Thy soul, I see,
Beneath this harden'd pride, this brutal courage,
Boils with black torments, and with inward tempest.
I know whence breaks that gleam of joy athwart
As lightning flashes o'er a troubled sky : [thee,
Thou dream'st the prince now falls beneath thy fury :
But hear and tremble—young Orestes lives !

Egis. Hence with thy vain predictions, doating
woman !—

SCENE VII.

EGISTHUS, CASSANDRA, &c., and to them Assassins sent to murder ORESTES.

Egis. Well, is Orestes dead ?

Ass. Ah, sir ! escaped—
When all was in confusion, here, and tumult.

Egis. O nothing then is done ! Fly ! tardy villains !
Pursue him to the farthest verge of earth.—
No dark retreat, no country—But here comes
Another storm. Distraction wings her pace !

SCENE VIII.

CLYTEMNESTRA, EGISTHUS, CASSANDRA, &c.

Clyt. Off! give me way! to desarts let me fly!
The wildest savage there!—

Why pierce me thus with looks?—In every eye
There is a dagger; chief in thine [*to EGISTHUS*]
Ha! villain!

I know thee; know these eyes, where smiling love
To the red glarings of a fury's torch
Is now transform'd.—Yes, traitor! turn away:
But, ere you go, give me my peace again;
Give me my happy family around;
Give me my virtue, honour—nay, my glory;
Orgiveme death, though death cannot relieve me.—

Are these the deeds of love?—I cannot step,
Unless I dip my shivering feet in blood.
Compared with this polluted, this dire palace,
The sepulchre is gay.—But whither fly?—

Ah! what avails it where the guilty fly,
Since from themselves they cannot!—Ha! behold!
The black abyss discloses to my view;
And down I go, a dark, a deep descent!—

Hell from beneath is moved at my approach:
Its princes flock around. Behold, they say,
The greatly wretched, greatly wicked woman!

She who prefer'd the villain to the hero!
The Trojan shades, with sharp derision, thank me:
The Grecian droop—Lo! where he comes himself!
See! how in sullen majesty he stalks!—

Oh, look not on me with that silent scorn!

I am too cursed already!—

[*Faints into the arms of her attendants.*]

Egis. Bear her hence:

And look she be attended well.—But hark!
What new alarm?

SCENE IX.

EGISTHUS, CASSANDRA, &c., and to them a Messenger.

Mes. As Melisander, sir,
Bore off Orestes, to the assembled senate
He show'd the prince, and roused them to revenge.
'Tis nought but rage. The people, in a torrent,
By Arcas headed, pour upon the palace.

Besides, each moment, Agamemnon's troops—
Egis. Quick! summon here my friends—In Io's
They ready wait. We this important day [grove
Will or with conquest crown, or bravely die.

Cass. No, tyrant, no! the gods refuse thee that:
Not like the brave, but like the trembling coward,
The assassinating coward, thou shalt die;
There! in that spot, where Agamemnon lies!

Egis. Lead these ill-boding women to their fate;
And guard Electra.

Cass. The most grateful gift
A tyrant can bestow is instant death.
We shall be happy soon. But all the gods,
Combining all their mercy, from remorse,
From scorn and misery, cannot save the villain.

EPILOGUE.

OUR bard, to modern epilogue a foe,
Thinks such mean mirth but deadens generous woe;
Dispels in idle air the moral sigh,
And wipes the tender tear from pity's eye:
No more with social warmth the bosom burns;
But all the unfeeling selfish man returns.*

Thus he began:—And you approved the strain;
Till the next couplet sunk to light and vain.
You check'd him there.—To you, to reason just,
He owns he triumph'd in your kind disgust.
Charm'd by your frown, by your displeasure graced,
He hails the rising virtue of your taste.
Wide will its influence spread as soon as known:
Truth, to be loved, needs only to be shown.
Confirm it, once, the fashion to be good:
(Since fashion leads the fool, and awes the rude)
No petulance shall wound the public ear;
No hand applaud what honour shuns to hear;
No painful blush the modest cheek shall stain;
The worthy breast shall heave with no disdain.
Chastised to decency, the British sage
Shall oft invite the fair, invite the sage:
Both shall attend well-pleased, well-pleased depart;
Or if they doom the verse, absolve the heart.

* Another epilogue was spoken after the first representation of the play, which began with the first six lines of this: but the rest of that epilogue having been very justly disliked by the audience, this was substituted in its place.

ALFRED ;

A Masque.

REPRESENTED BEFORE

THEIR ROYAL HIGHNESSES THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS OF WALES,

AT CLIFFDEN, ON THE 1ST OF AUGUST, 1740.

BY THOMSON AND MALLET.

Si velimus cum priorum temporum necessitate certare, vincemur. Ingeniosior est enim ad excogitandum simulatio, veritate ; servitus, libertate ; metus, amore.—PLIN. *Pan. Trajan.*

THE ARGUMENT.

After the Danes had made themselves masters of Chippenham, the strongest city in the kingdom of Wessex, Alfred was at once abandoned by all his subjects. In this universal defection, that monarch found himself obliged to retire into the little island of Athelney, in Somersetshire ; a place then rough with woods and of difficult access. There, in the habit of a peasant, he lived unknown for some time, in a shepherd's cottage. He is supposed to be found in this retreat by the Earl of Devon, whose castle, upon the river Tau, was then besieged by the Danes.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

ALFRED.
ELTRUDA.
HERMIT.

EARL OF DEVON.
CORIN, a shepherd.
EMMA, his wife.

A Bard, Soldiers, Spirits.

The SCENE represents a plain, surrounded with woods. On one side, a cottage ; on the other, flocks and herds in distant prospect. A hermit's cave in full view, overhung with trees, wild and grotesque.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

CORIN, EMMA.

Emma. SHEPHERD, 'tis he. Beneath yon aged
All on the flowery turf he lays him down. [oak,
Corin. Soft: let us not disturb him. Gentle Emma,
Poor though he be, unfriended and unknown,
My pity waits with reverence on his fortune.
Modest of carriage, and of speech most gracious,
As if some saint or angel, in disguise,

Had graced our lowly cottage with his presence,
He steals, I know not how, into the heart,
And makes it pant to serve him. Trust me, Emma,
He is no common man.

Emma. Some lord, perhaps,
Or valiant chief, that from our deadly foe,
The haughty, cruel, unbelieving Dane,
Seeks shelter here.

Corin. And shelter he shall find.
Who loves his country, is my friend and brother.

Behold him well. Fair virtue in his aspect,
Even through the homely russet that conceals him,
Shines forth and proves him noble. Seest thou, Emma,
Yon western clouds? the sun they strive to hide,
Yet darts his beam around.

Emma. Your thought is mine;
He is not what his present fortunes speak him.
But, ah! the raging foe is all around us:
We dare not keep him here.

Corin. Content thee, wife:
This island is of strength. Nature's own hand
Hath planted round a deep defence of woods,
The sounding ash, the mighty oak; each tree
A sheltering grove: and choked up all between
With wild encumbrance of perplexing thorns,
And horrid brakes. Beyond this woody verge,
Two rivers broad and rapid hem us in.
Along their channel spreads the gulfy pool,
And trembling quagmire, whose deceitful green
Betrays the foot it tempts. One path alone
Winds to this plain, so roughly difficult,
This single arm, poor shepherd as I am,
Could well dispute it with twice twenty Danes.

Emma. Yet think, my Corin, on the stern decree
Of that proud foe, "Who harbours or relieves
An English captain, dies the death of traitors:
But who their haunts discovers, shall be safe,
And high rewarded."

Corin. Now, just Heaven forbid,
A British man should ever count for gain
What villany must earn. No: are we poor?
Be honesty our riches. Are we mean,
And humbly born? The true heart makes us noble.
These hands can toil, can sow the ground, and reap
For thee and thy sweet babes. Our daily labour
Is daily wealth: it finds us bread and raiment.
Could Danish gold give more? And for the death
These tyrants threaten, let me rather meet it,
Than e'er betray my guest.

Emma. Alas the while,
That loyal faith is fled from hall and bower,
To dwell with village-swains!

Corin. Ah, look! behold!
Where, like some goodly tree by wintry winds
Torn from the roots and withering, our sad guest
Lies on the ground diffused.

Emma. I weep to see it.

Corin. Thou hast a heart sweet pity loves to
dwell in.

Dry up thy tears; and lean on this just hope:
If yet to do away his country's shame,
To serve her bravely on some blest occasion,
If for these ends this stranger sought our cottage,
The heavenly hosts are hovering here unseen,
To watch and to protect him.—But, oh! when—
My heart burns for it—shall I see the hour
Of vengeance on these Danish infidels,
That war with Heaven and us?

Emma. Alas, my love!
These passions are not for the poor man's state.
To Heaven and to the rulers of the land
Leave such ambitious thoughts. Be warn'd, my
And think our little all depends on thee. [*Corin* :

SONG.

O Peace! the fairest child of Heaven,
To whom the sylvan reign was given,
The vale, the fountain, and the grove,
With every softer scene of love:
Return, sweet Peace! and cheer the weeping swain!
Return, with Ease and Pleasure in thy train.

Corin. Hush: cease thy song—For see, our
mournful guest

Has raised his head—and lo! who comest to greet him;
His friend, the woodman of the neighbouring dale,
Whom late, as yester evening-star arose,
At his request I found and hither brought.

SCENE II.

ALFRED. Earl of DEVON.

Alf. How long, O ever-gracious Heaven! how
Shall war thus desolate this prostrate land? [long
All, all is lost—And Alfred lives to tell it!
His cities laid in dust! his subjects slaughter'd!
Or into slaves debased! the murderous foe
Proud and exulting in the general shame!—
Are these things so? and he without the means
Of great revenge? cast down below the hope
Of succouring those he weeps for? Oh, despair!
Oh, grief of griefs!

Dev. Old as I am, my liege,
In rough war harden'd, and with death familiar,
These eyes have long forgot to melt with softness:
But oh, my gracious master, they have seen—
All-pitying Heaven!—such sights of ruthless rage,
Of total desolation—

Alf. Oh, my people!
Oh, ruin'd England!—Devon, those were blest,
Who died before this time. Ha! and those robbers,
That violate the sanctity of leagues,
The reverend seal of oaths; that basely broke,
Like nightly ruffians, on the hour of peace,
And stole a victory from men unarm'd, [son
Those Danes enjoy their crimes! dread Vengeance!
Of power and justice! come array'd in terrors,
Thy garment red with blood, thy keen sword drawn:
O come, and on the heads of faithless men
Pour ample retribution; men whose triumph
Upbraids eternal justice.—But no more:
Submission is Heaven's due.—I will not launch
Into that dark abyss where thought must drown.
Proceed, my lord: on with the mournful tale
My griefs broke off.

Dev. From yonder heath-crown'd hill,
This island's eastern point, where in one stream
The Thone and Parret roll their blending waves,
I look'd, and saw the progress of the foe,
As of some tempest, some devouring fire,
That ruins without mercy where it spreads.
The riches of the year, the golden grain
That liberal crown'd our plains, lies trampled wide
By hostile feet, or rooted up; and waste
Deforms the broad highway. From space to space,
Far as my straining eye could shoot its beam,
Trees, cottages, and castles smoke to heaven
In one ascending cloud. But oh for pity!
That way, my lord, where yonder verdant height
Declining slides into a fruitful vale,
Unightly now and bare; a few poor hinds,
Grey-hair'd, and thinly clad, stood and beheld
The common ravage: motionless and mute
With hands to heaven up-raised, they stood, and
My tears attended theirs— [wept—

Alf. If this sad sight
Could pain thee to such anguish, what must I
Their king and parent feel?—It is a torment
Beyond the strength of patience to endure.
Why end I not at once this wretched being?

The means are in my hand.—But shall a prince
Thus poorly shroud him in the grave from pain,
And sense of shame? The madman, nay the coward,
Has often dared the same. A monarch holds
His life in trust for others. I will live then :
Let Heaven dispose the rest.

Dev. Thrice noble Alfred,
And England's only hope, whose virtues raise
Our frail mortality, our human dust,
Up to angelic splendour and perfection ;
With you to bear the worst of ills, the spoil
Of wasteful war, the loss of life or freedom,
Is happiness, is glory.

Alf. Ah ! look round thee :
That mud-built cottage is thy sovereign's palace.
Yon hind, whose daily toil is all his wealth,
Lodges and feeds him. Are these times for flattery?
Or call it praise ; such gaudy attributes
Would misbecome our best and proudest fortunes.
But what are mine? what is this high-praised Alfred?
Among ten thousand wretches, most undone.
That prince who sees his country laid in ruins,
His subjects perishing beneath the sword
Of foreign rage, who sees and cannot save them,
Is but supreme in misery !

Dev. My liege !
Who has not known ill fortune, never knew
Himself, or his own virtue. Be of comfort :
We can but die at last. Till that hour comes,
Let noble anger keep our hopes alive.
A sudden thought, as if from heaven inspired,
Darts on my soul. One castle still is ours,
Though close begirt and shaken by the Danes.
In this disguise, my chance of passing on,
Of entering there unknown, is promising,
And wears a lucky face. 'Tis our last stake,
And I will play it like a man whose life,
Whose honour hangs upon a single cast.
Meanwhile, my lord—

Alf. Ha ! Devon, thou hast roused
My slumbering virtue. I applaud thy thought.
The praise of this brave daring shall be thine :
The danger shall be common. We will both
Straight tempt the Danish camp, and gain this fort ;
To animate our brothers of the war,
Those Englishmen who yet deserve that name.
And hear, eternal justice ! if my life
Can make atonement for them, King of kings !
Accept thy willing victim. On my head
Be all their woes : to them be grace and mercy.
Come on, my noble friend.

Dev. Ah, good my liege,
What fits a private valour and might grace
The simple soldier's courage, would proclaim
His general's rashness. You are England's king :
Your infant children, and your much-loved queen ;
Nay more, the public weal, ten thousand souls,
Whose hope you are, whose all depends on you,
Forbid this enterprise. 'Tis nobler virtue
To check this ardour, to reserve your sword
For some great day of known and high import ;
That to your country, to the judging world
Shall justify all hazards you may run.
This trial suits but me.

Alf. Well, go, my friend ;
If thou shalt prosper, thou wilt call me hence
To head my people from their fears recover'd.
May that good angel, who inspired thy thought,
Throw round thy steps a veil of cloudy air,
That thou mayst walk invisible and safe.

He's gone—and now without a friend to aid me,
I stand alone, abandon'd to the gloom
Of my sad thoughts—Said I without a friend ?
Oh, blasphemous distrust ! Have I not Thee,
All-powerful friend, and guardian of the righteous,
Have I not Thee to aid me ? Let that thought
Support my drooping soul.—But, list. Ha ! whence
These air-born notes that sound in measured
Through this vast silence ? [sweetness

SCENE III.

Solemn music is heard at a distance. It comes nearer in a full symphony : after which a single trumpet sounds a high and awakening air. Then the following stanzas are sung by two aerial Spirits, unseen.

First Spirit.

Hear, Alfred, father of the state,
Thy genius Heaven's high will declare !
What proves the hero truly great,
Is never, never to despair,
Is never to despair.

Second Spirit.

Thy hope awake, thy heart expand
With all its vigour, all its fires.
Arise ! and save a sinking land !
Thy country calls, and Heaven inspires.

Both Spirits.

Earth calls, and Heaven inspires.

SCENE IV.

Alf. (alone) All hail, ye gentle ministers of heaven !
Your song inspires new patience through my breast,
And generous hope : it wings my mounting soul
Above the entangling mass of earthly passions,
That keep frail man, though struggling to be free,
Still fluttering in the dust.

SCENE V.

ALFRED, the HERMIT advancing from his cave.

Alf. Thrice-happy hermit !
Whom thus the heavenly habitants attend,
Blessing thy calm retreat ; while ruthless war
Fills the polluted land with blood and crimes.
In this extremity of England's fate,
Led by thy sacred character, I come
For comfort and advice. Thy aged wisdom,
Purged from the stormy cloud of human passions,
And by a ray from heaven exalted, sees
Deep through futurity. Say what remains,
What yet remains to save our prostrate country ?
Nor scorn this anxious question even from me,
A nameless stranger.

Hermit. Alfred, England's king,
All hail ! and welcome to this humble cell. [father ?
Alf. Whence dost thou know me, venerable
Hermit. Last night, when with a draught from
that cool fountain

I had my wholesome sober supper crown'd ;
As is my stated custom, forth I walk'd,
Beneath the solemn gloom, and glittering sky,
To feed my soul with prayer and meditation.

And thus to inward harmony composed,
That sweetest music of the grateful heart,
Whose each emotion is a silent hymn,
I to my couch retired. Straight on mine eyes
A pleasing slumber fell, whose mystic power
Seal'd up my senses, but enlarged my soul.
At once, disclosed amid the dark waste night,
Appear'd a vision—not the dream of fancy,
But sent from heaven, prophetic and divine.
For know, this ample element contains
Unnumber'd spiritual beings, or malign,
Or good to man. These, when the grosser eye
Of nature sleeps, oft play their several parts,
As on a scene, before the attentive mind,
And to the favour'd man disclose the future.
Led by these spirits friendly to this isle,
I lived through future ages; felt the virtue,
The great, the glorious passions that will fire
Distant posterity: when guardian laws
Are by the patriot in the glowing senate
Won from corruption; when the impatient arm
Of liberty, invincible, shall scourge
The tyrants of mankind—and when the deep,
Through all her swelling waves, shall proudly joy
Beneath the boundless empire of thy sons.
I saw thee, Alfred, too—But o'er thy fortunes
Lay clouds impenetrable.

Alf. Ah, good hermit,
That scene is dark indeed! Ye awful powers!
To what am I reserved? Still must I roam
A wanderer here, inglorious and unknown?
Or am I destined your great instrument,
From fierce oppression to redeem this land?

Hermit. Perhaps, the last. But, prince, remember, then,

The vows, the noble uses, of affliction.
Preserve the quick humanity it gives,
The pitying, social sense of human weakness:
Yet keep thy stubborn fortune entire,
The manly heart that to another's woe
Is tender, but superior to its own.
Learn to submit; yet learn to conquer fortune.
Attach thee firmly to the virtuous deeds
And offices of life; to life itself,
With all its vain and transient joys, sit loose.
Chief, let devotion to the Sovereign Mind,
A steady, cheerful, absolute dependance
On his best, wisest government, possess thee.
In thoughtless gay prosperity, when all
Attends our wish, when nought is seen around us
But kneeling flattery, and obedient fortune;
Then are blind mortals apt, within themselves
To fix their stay, forgetful of the giver.
But when thus humbled, Alfred, as thou art,
When to their feeble natural powers reduced,
'Tis then they feel this universal truth—
That Heaven is all in all—and man is nothing.

Alf. I thank thee, father, for thy pious counsel.
And witness, thou dread Power! who seest my
That if not to perform my regal task, [heart;
To be the common father of my people,
Patron of honour, virtue, and religion;
If not to shelter industry, to guard
Her honest portion from oppressive pride,
From wasteful riot, and the sons of rapine,
Who basely ravish what they dare not earn;
If not to deal out justice, like the sun,
With equal light; if not to spread thy bounty,
The treasures trusted to me, not my own,
On all the smiling ranks of nourish'd life;

If not to raise our drooping English name,
To clothe it yet with terror; make this land
Renown'd for peaceful arts to bless mankind,
And generous war to humble proud oppressors:
If not to build on an eternal base,
On liberty and laws, the public weal:
If not for these great ends I am ordain'd,
May I ne'er idly fill the throne of England!

Her. Still may thy breast these sentiments retain,
In prosperous life.

Alf. Prosperity were ruin,
Could it destroy or change such thoughts as these.
When those whom Heaven distinguishes o'er
millions,
Profusely gives them honours, riches, power,
Whate'er the expanded heart can wish; when they,
Accepting the reward, neglect the duty;
Or worse, pervert those gifts to deeds of ruin:
Is there a wretch they rule so mean as they?
Guilty, at once, of sacrilege to Heaven,
And of perfidious robbery to men—
But hark! methinks I hear a plaintive voice
Sigh through the vale, and wake the mournful echo.

SONG.

Sweet valley, say, where, pensive lying,
For me, our children, England, sighing,
The best of mortals leans his head.
Ye fountains, dimpled by my sorrow,
Ye brooks that my complainings borrow,
O lead me to his lonely bed;
Or if my lover,
Deep woods, you cover,
Ah whisper where your shadows o'er him spread!

'Tis not the loss of pomp and pleasure,
Of empire or of tinsel treasure,
That drops this tear, that swells this groan:
No; from a nobler cause proceeding,
A heart with love and fondness bleeding
I breathe my sadly-pleasing moan,
With other anguish
I scorn to languish:
For love will feel no sorrows but his own.

SCENE VI.

ALFRED, HERMIT, ELTRUDA, *advancing.*

Alf. Sure by the voice, and purport of the song,
This generous mourner is my queen Eltruda.
And yet how can that be?—Oh, all good powers!
'Tis she! 'tis she!

Eltr. My lord, my life, my Alfred!
Oh, take me to thy arms; with toil o'ercome,
And sudden transport, thus at once to find thee,
In this wild forest, pathless and perplex'd!

Alf. Come to my soul, thou dearest, best of women!

Come, and repose thy sorrows in my bosom.
Oh, all my passions mix in doubtful strife!
If pain or joy prevail, I scarce can say,
While thus I clasp thee, and recal the perils
To which thy trembling steps have been exposed.
Why hast thou left the convent where I placed thee?
Why, unprotected, trust thee to a land,
A barbarous land, where rages Danish war!
Our hospitable England is no more! [country,
Eltr. Dire was the cause, my Alfred. The roused
All wild in breathless terror and confusion,
Inform'd us, a near party of the Danes,

Whose brutal fury spares no sex, no age,
No place however privileged or holy,
Were on full march that way. Instant I fled,
In this disguise with only these attendants:
But in our way oft cheer'd by airy voices,
To bear to this retreat our helpless children.

Alf. Ah, wanderers too young! ah, hapless chil-
But more unhappy sire ! who cannot give, [dren!
To those he loves, protection.

Ell. Thou too, Alfred,
Art thou not unattended ? None to serve thee,
To soothe thy woes, to watch thy broken slumbers !
And when the silent tear o'erflows thy eye,
None, with the warm and cordial lip of love,
To kiss it off ! There is in love a power,
There is a soft divinity, that draws
Transport even from distress ; that gives the heart
A certain pang, excelling far the joys
Of gross unfeeling life. Besides, my Alfred,
Even had the fury of this barbarous foe
Not forced me from the convent, life is short ;
And now it trembles on the wing of danger ;
Why should we lose it then ? One well-saved hour,
In such a tender circumstance to lovers,
Is better than an age of common time.

Alf. Oh, 'tis too much ! thy tenderness o'ercomes
me !

Nay, look not on me with that sweet dejection,
Through tears that pierce my soul !—Cheer thee,
my love ;

Hope still the best ; that better days await us,
And fairer from remembrance.—Thou, Eltruda,
Thou art a pledge of happiness ! On thee
Good angels wait ; they led thy journey hither :
And I have heard them, in this wild retreat,
Warbling immortal airs, and strains of comfort.—
But, ah, the foe is round us : and this isle
Now holds my soul's best wealth, the treasured
Of all my joys. I go to skirt it round, [store
To visit every creek and sedgy bank,
Where rustles through the reeds the shadowy gale ;
Or where the bending umbrage drinks the stream ;
Lest danger unawares should steal upon us.
And now, by slow degrees, solemn and sad,
Wide-falling o'er the world, the nightly shades
Hush the brown woods and deepen all their
horrors :

While humbled into rest, and awed by darkness,
Each creature seeks the covert. To that cell
Retire, my life. I will not long be absent.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Alf. (alone.) 'Tis now the depth of darkness and
repose.

All nature seems to rest : while Alfred wakes
To think, and to be wretched.—Where yon oak
With wide and dusky shade o'erhangs the stream,
That glides in silence by, I took my stand :
What time the glow-worm through the dewy path
First shot his twinkling flame. I stood attentive,
Listening each noise from wood-clad hill and dale ;
But all was hush'd around. Nor trumpet's clang,
Nor shout of roving foe, nor hasty tread
Of evening passenger, disturb'd the wide
And awful stillness. Homeward as I sped,
O'er many a delve, through many a path perplex'd,
Maze running into maze ; ill-boding thoughts
Haunted my steps.—Perhaps my gallant friend,
Discover'd to the Danes, this moment bleeds
Beneath their swords ! or lies a breathless corse,
The prey of midnight wolves.—Some mournful
Strikes sudden on my sense. [sound

SCENE II.

ALFRED, ELTRUDA.

Ell. Here will I lean
On this green bank, to wait the wish'd return
Of morning and my lord.

Alf. My gentle love,
Eltruda, why to this untimely sky
Expose thy health ? The dews of night fall fast :
The chill breeze sighs aloud.

Ell. I could not rest.
Can love repose when apprehension wakes,
And whispers to the heart all dreadful things,
That walk with night and solitude ? Methought,

In each low murmur of the woods, I heard
The invading foe—or heard my Alfred groan !
Thou tender infants too—their fancied cries
Still sound within my ears !

Alf. Eltruda, there
I am a woman too : I who should cheer,
And shelter thee from every care. My children !
The thought of what may chance to them, completes
Their father's sum of woes. Oh, what safe shade
Can screen their opening blossom from the storm
That beats severe on us ! Not sweeter buds
The primrose in the vale, nor sooner shrinks
At winter's churlish blast—

Ell. Behold, my lord—
Good angels shield us—What a flood of brightness
Waves round our heads !

Alf. The hermit moves this way.
That wondrous man holds converse with the host
Of higher natures. These far-beaming fires
Were doubtless kindled up at his command.
Be silent and attentive.

SCENE III.

ALFRED, ELTRUDA, HERMIT.

Her. I have heard
Thy fond complainings, Alfred.

Alf. You have then,
Good father, heard the cause that wrings them
from me.

Her. The human race are sons of sorrow born,
And each must have his portion. Vulgar minds
Refuse, or crouch beneath their load : the brave
Bear theirs without repining.

Alf. Who can bear
The shaft that wounds him through an infant's
side ?

When whom we love, to whom we owe protection,
Implore the hand we cannot reach to save them ?

Her. Weep not, Eltruda.—Yet thou art a king,

All private passions fall before that name.

Thy subjects claim thee whole.

Alf. Can public trust,
O reverend sage ! destroy the softer ties
That twine around the parent's yearning heart,
That holy passion Heaven itself infused,
And blended with the stream that feeds our life ?

Her. You love your children, prince—

Alf. Lives there on earth,
In air, or ocean, creature tame or wild,
That has not known this universal love ?
All nature feels it intimate and deep,
And all her sons of instinct or of reason.

Her. Then show that passion in its noblest form.
Season their tender years with every virtue,
Social or self-retired ; of public greatness,
Or lovely in the hour of private life ;
With all that can exalt, or can adorn
Their princely rank.

Alf. Alas ! their hope must stoop,
Such my unhappy fate, to humbler aims :
Affliction and base want must be their teachers.

Her. Affliction is the wholesome soil of virtue :
Where patience, honour, sweet humanity,
Calm fortitude take root, and strongly flourish.
But prosperous fortune, that allures with pleasure,

Dazzles with pomp, and undermines with flattery,
Poisons the soil, and its best product kills.
Shouldst thou regain thy throne—

Alf. My throne ? What glimpse,
What smallest ray of hope—

Her. That day may come—
What do I feel ? My labouring breast expands
To give the glorious inspiration room.

And now the cloud that o'er thy future fate,
Like total night, lay heavy and obscure,
Fades into air : and all the brightening scene
Dawns gay before me ! A long line of kings,
From thee descending, glorious and renown'd,
In shadowy pomp I see !

Genius of England ! hovering near,
In all thy radiant charms appear.

O come and summon, from the world unknown,
Those mighty chiefs, those sons of future fame,
Who, ages hence, this island shall adorn,
And spread to distant realms her glorious name.
Slow let the visionary forms arise,
And solemn pass before our wondering eyes.

[*Music grand and awful. The Genius descending
sings the following*

SONG.

From those eternal regions bright,
Where suns, that never set in night,

Diffuse the golden day :
Where Spring, unfading, pours around,
O'er all the dew-impair'd ground,

Her thousand colours gay :
O whether on the fountain's flowery side,
Whence living waters glide,
Or in the fragrant grove,

Whose shade embosoms peace and love,
New pleasures all our hours employ,
And ravish every sense with every joy !

Great heirs of empire ! yet unborn,
Who shall this island late adorn ;
A monarch's drooping thought to cheer,
Appear ! appear ! appear !

*Spirits of EDWARD III., PHILIPPA his queen, and the
BLACK PRINCE his son, arise.*

Her. Alfred, look ; and say,
What seest thou yonder ?

Alf. Three majestic shapes :
Two habited like mighty warriors old ;
A third in whose bright aspect beauty smiles
More soft and feminine. A lucid veil,
From her fair neck dependant floats around,
Light-hovering in the gale.

Her. O Alfred, man
Beloved of Heaven, behold a king *indeed* ;
Matchless in arms ; in arts of peaceful rule,
A sovereign's truest glory, yet more famed,
England's third Edward !—At his fear'd approach,
Proud France, even now, through all her duke-
doms quakes.

Her Genius sighs : and from the eternal shore,
The soul of her great Charles, a recent guest,
Looks back to earth, and mourns the distant woes
His realms are doom'd to feel from Edward's wrath.
Beneath his standard, Britain shall go forth,
Array'd for conquest, terrible in glory :
And nations shrink before her. Oh, what deaths,
What desolation shall her vengeance spread,
From engines yet unfound ; whose lightnings flash,
Whose thunders roar, amazing, o'er the plain :
As if this king had summon'd from on high
Heaven's dread artillery to fight his battle !

Nor is renown in war his sole ambition :
A nobler passion labours in his breast—
Alfred, attend—to make his people blest !
The sacred rights that reason loudly claims
For free-born men—these, Alfred, are his care :
Oft to confirm, and fix them on the base
Of equal laws.—O father of mankind !
Successive praises from a grateful land
Shall saint thy name for ever !

Alf. Holy sage,
Whom angels thus enlighten and inspire,
My bosom kindles at thy heaven-born flame.
Great Edward ! Be thy conquests and their praise
Unrival'd to thyself. But O thy fame
For care paternal of the public weal !
For England blest at home—my rapt heart pants
To equal that renown !

Her. Know farther, Alfred ;
A sovereign's great example forms a people.
The public breast is noble, or is vile,
As he inspires it. In this Edward's time,
Warm'd by his courage, by his honour raised,
High flames the British spirit like the sun,
To shine o'er half the globe : and where it shines,
The cherish'd world to brighten and enrich.

Last see this monarch in his hour of leisure ;
Even social on a throne, and tasting joys
To solitary greatness seldom known,
As friend, as husband, and as father blest.
That god-like youth remark, his eldest hope,
Who gives new lustre to the name he bears ;
A hero ere a man.—I see him now
On Cressy's glorious plain ! The father's heart,
With anxious love and wonder at his daring,
Beats high in mingled transport. Great himself,
Great above jealousy, the guilty mark
That brands all meaner minds, see, he applauds

The filial excellence, and gives him scope
To blaze in his full brightness!—Lo, again
He sends him dreadful to a nobler field:
The danger and the glory all his own!
A captive king, the rival of his arms,
I see adorn his triumph! Heaven! what grace,
What splendour from his gracious temper mild
That triumph draws! As gentle mercy kind,
He cheers the hostile prince whose fall he weeps!
Alf. A son so rich in virtues, and so graced
With all that gives those virtues fair to shine,
When I would ask of Heaven some mighty boon,
Should claim the foremost place.

Her. Remember then,
What to thy infant sons from thee is due,
As parent and as prince.

Ell. Forgive me, Hermit,
Forgive a queen and wife her anxious fondness.
Yon beauteous shade, that as I gaze her o'er,
My wonder draws, escapes your graver thought.

Her. O bright Eltruda! thou whose blooming
youth,
Whose amiable sweetness promise blessings
To Alfred and to England! see, and mark,
In yonder pleasing form, the best of wives,
The happiest too, repaid with all the faith,
With all the friendship, love and duty claim.
She, powerful o'er the heart her charms enslave—
O virtue rarely practised!—uses nobly
That happy influence; to prompt each purpose
Fair honour kindles in her Edward's breast.
Amid the pomps, the pleasures of a court,
Humble of heart, severely good; the friend
Of modest worth, the parent of the poor.
Eltruda! oh, transmit these noblest charms
To that fair daughter, that unfolding rose, [loves.
With which, as on this day*, Heaven crown'd your

Spirit of ELIZABETH arises.

Alf. Say, who is she, in whom the noble graces,
The engaging manner, dignity, and ease,
Are join'd with manly sense and resolution?

Her. The great Eliza. She, amid a world
That threatening swells in high commotion round
Each dangerous state her unrelenting foe, [her;
And chief a proud enormous empire stretch'd
O'er half mankind; with not one friendly power,
But what her kind creating hand shall raise
From out the marshes of the branching Rhine;
And mined, at home, her ever-tottering throne
By restless bigots, who, beneath the mask
Of mild religion, are to every crime
Set loose, the faithless sons of barbarous zeal:
Yet she shall crown this happy isle with peace,
With arts, with riches, grandeur, and renown;
And quell, by turns, the madness of her foes.
As when the winds, from different quarters, urge
The tempest on our shore; secure the cliffs
Repel its idle rage, and pour it back,
In broken billows, foaming to the main.

Alf. How shall she, Hermit, gain these glorious
ends?

Her. By silent wisdom, whose informing power
Works unperceived: that seems in council slow;
But, when resolved, and ripe for execution,
That darts like lightning from the secret gloom:
By ever seizing the right point of view,
Her truest interest; which she firm pursues,

With steady patience, through the maze of state,
The storm of opposition, the mix'd views,
And thwarting managed passions of mankind:
By healing the divisions of her people,
And sowing the fell pest among her foes:
By saving, from the vermin of a court,
Her treasure; which, when fair occasion calls,
She knows to lavish, in protecting arts,
In guarding nations, and in nursing states:
By calling up to power, and public life,
Each virtue, each ability: yet she,
Amid the various worthies glowing round her
Still shines the first; the central sun that wakes,
That rules their every motion: not the slave,
And passive property of her own creatures.
But the great soul that animates her reign,
That lights it to perfection, is the love,
The confidence unbounded, which her wisdom,
Her probity and justice, shall inspire
Into the public breast. Hence cordial faith,
Which nought can shake; hence unexhausted
And hence, above all mercenary force, [treasure:
The hand that by the free-born heart is raised,
And guards the blended weal of prince and people.
She too shall raise Britannia's naval power;
Shall greatly ravish, from insulting Spain,
The world-commanding sceptre of the deep.

Ell. O matchless queen! O glory of her sex!
The great idea, father, fills my soul,
And bids it glow beyond a woman's passions.

Spirit of WILLIAM III. arises.

Her. Once more, O Alfred, raise thine eyes,
and mark

Who next adorns the scene, yon laurel'd shade.
Ere yet the age that closed this female reign
Hath led around its train of circling years,
Shall Britain on the verge of ruin stand.
A monarch, lost to greatness, to renown,
The slave of dreaming monks, shall fill her throne,
Weak and aspiring; fond of lawless rule,
The lawless rule his mean ambition covets
Unequal to acquire. Yon prince thou saw'st,
To glory tutor'd by the hand severe
Of sharp adversity, shall Heaven upraise,
And injured nations with joint call invoke,
Their last, their only refuge. Lo! he comes:
Wide o'er the billows of the boundless deep
His navy rides triumphant: and the shores
Of shouting Albion echo with his name.
Immortal William! from before his face,
Flies Superstition, flies oppressive power,
With vile Servility that crouch'd and kiss'd
The whip he trembled at. From this great hour
Shall Britain date her rights and laws restored:
And one high purpose rule her sovereign's heart;
To scourge the pride of France, that foe profess'd
To England and to freedom. Yet I see,
From distant climes in peaceful triumph borne,
Another king arise! His early youth
With verdant laurel crown'd, for deeds of arms
That reason's voice approves; for courage, raised
Beyond all aid from passion, greatly calm!
Intrepidly serene!—In days of peace,
Around his throne the human virtues wait,
And fair adorn him with their mildest beams;
Good without show, above ambition great;
Wise, equal, merciful, the friend of man!
O Alfred! should thy fate, long ages hence,
In moving scenes recall'd, exalt the joy

* This masque was written to be acted at Clifden, on
the birthday of her royal highness the princess Augusta.

Of some glad festal day, before a prince
Sprung from that king beloved—Hear, gracious
Thy soft humanity, thy patriot heart, [Heaven !
Thy manly virtue, steady, great, resolved,
Be his supreme ambition ! and with these,
The happiness, the glory, that await
Thy better days, be shower'd upon his head !

Alf. O Hermit ! thou hast raised me to new life !
New hopes, new triumphs swell my bounding
heart—

Her. It comes ! it comes !—The promised
scene discloses !

Already the great work of fate begins !
The mighty wheels are turning, whence will spread,
Beyond the limits of our narrow world,
The fair dominions, Alfred, of thy sons.
Behold the warrior bright with Danish spoils !—
The raven droops his wings—and hark ! the trumpet,
Exulting, speaks the rest.

SCENE IV.

Symphony of martial music.

ALFRED, ELTRUDA, HERMIT, *Earl of Devon, followed by*
Soldiers.

Alf. My friend return'd !
O welcome, welcome ! but what happy tidings
Smile in thy cheerful countenance ?

Dev. My liege,
Your troops have been successful. But to Heaven
Ascend the praise ! For sure the event exceeds
The hand of man.

Alf. How was it, noble Devon ?

Dev. You know my castle is not hence far distant.
Thither I sped : and in a Danish habit
The trenches passing, by a secret way,
Known to myself alone, emerged at once
Amid my joyful soldiers. There I found
A generous few, the veteran hardy gleanings
Of many a hapless fight. They with a fierce
Heroic fire inspirited each other ;
Resolved on death, disdaining to survive
Their dearest country.—“ If we fall,” I cried,
“ Let us not tamely fall like passive cowards !
No : let us live—or let us die, like men !
Come on, my friends : to Alfred we will cut
Our glorious way ; or, as we nobly perish,
Will offer to the genius of our country
Whole hecatombs of Danes.”—As if one soul
Had moved them all, around their heads they flash'd
Their flaming faulchions—“ Lead us to those
Danes !—

Our country ?—vengeance !” was the general cry.
Straight on the careless drowsy camp we rush'd :
And rapid, as the flame devours the stubble,
Bore down the heartless Danes. With this success
Our enterprise increased. Not now contented
To hew a passage through the flying herd ;
We, unremitting, urged a total rout.
The valiant Hubba bites the bloody field,
With twice six hundred Danes around him strow'd.

Alf. My glorious friend !—this action has restored
Our sinking country.—What reward can equal
A deed so great ?—Is not yon pictured Raven
Their famous magic standard—Emblem fit
To speak the savage genius of the people—
That oft has scatter'd on our troops dismay,
And feeble consternation ?

Dev.

'Tis the same,
Wrought by the sisters of the Danish king,
Of furious Ivar, in a midnight hour :
While the sick moon at their enchanted song,
Wrapt in pale tempest, labour'd through the clouds,
The demons of destruction then, they say,
Were all abroad, and mixing with the woof
Their baleful power : the sisters ever sung ;
“ Shake, standard, shake, this ruin on our foes !”

Her. So these infernal powers, with rays of
truth,
Still deck their fables, to delude who trust them.

Alf. But where, my noble cousin, are the rest
Of your brave troops ?

Dev. On t'other side the stream,
That half incloses this retreat, I left them.
Roused from the fear, with which it was congeal'd
As in a frost, the country pours amain.

The spirit of our ancestors is up,
The spirit of the free ! and with a voice
That breathes success, they all demand their king.

Alf. Quick, let us join them, and improve their
We cannot be too hasty to secure [ardour.
The glances of occasion.

SCENE the Last.

To them CORIN, EMMA, kneeling to ALFRED.

Corin. Good my liege,
Pardon the poor unequal entertainment,
Which we, unknowing—

Alf. Rise, my honest shepherd,
I came to thee a peasant, not a prince :
Thy rural entertainment was sincere,
Plain, hospitable, kind : such as, I hope,
Will ever mark the manners of this nation.
You friendly lodged me, when by all deserted :
And shall have ample recompense.

Corin. One boon
Is all I crave.

Alf. Good shepherd, speak thy wish.

Corin. Permission, in your wars, to serve your
grace :

For, though here lost in solitary shades,
A simple swain, I bear an English heart :
A heart that burns with rage to see those Danes,
Those foreign ruffians, those inhuman pirates,
Oft our inferiors proved, thus lord it o'er us.

Alf. Brave countryman, come on. 'Tis such as
thou,

Who from affection serve, and free-born zeal,
To guard what'er is dear and sacred to them,
That are a king's best honour and defence.

EMMA sings the following Song.

If those who live in shepherd's bower
Press not the rich and stately bed,
The new-mown hay and breathing flower
A softer couch beneath them spread.

If those who sit at shepherd's board
Soothe not their taste by wanton art ;
They take what nature's gifts afford,
And take it with a cheerful heart.

If those who drain the shepherd's bowl
No high and sparkling wines can boast,
With wholesome cups they cheer the soul,
And crown them with the village toast.

If those who join in shepherd's sport,
Gay-dancing on the daisied ground,
Have not the splendour of a court,
Yet love adorns the merry round.

Alf. My loved Eltruda ! thou shalt here remain,
With gentle Emma, and this reverend hermit.
Ye silver streams, that murmuring wind around
This dusky spot, to you I trust my all !
Oh, close around her, woods ! for her, ye vales,
Throw forth your flowers, your softest lap diffuse !

And Thou ! whose secret and expansive hand
Moves all the springs of this vast universe :
Whose government astonishes ; who here,
In a few hours, beyond our utmost hope,
Beyond our thought, yet doubting, hast clear'd up
The storm of fate : preserve what thy kind will,
Thy bountiful appointment, makes so dear
To human hearts ! preserve my queen and children !
Preserve the hopes of England ! while I go
To finish thy great work, and save my country.

Elt. Go, pay the debt of honour to the public.
If ever woman, Alfred, loved her husband
More fondly than herself, I claim that virtue,
That heart-felt happiness. Yet by our loves
I swear that in a glorious death with thee
I rather would be wrapt, than live long years
To charm thee from the rugged paths of honour :
So much I think thee born for beauteous deeds,
And the bright course of glory.

Alf. Matchless woman !
Love, at thy voice, is kindled to ambition.
Be this my dearest triumph, to approve me
A husband worthy of the best Eltruda.

Her. Behold, my lord, our venerable bard,
Aged and blind, him whom the muses favour.
Yet ere you go, in our loved country's praise,
That noblest theme, hear what his rapture breathes.

AN ODE.

When Britain first, at Heaven's command,
Arose from out the azure main,
This was the charter of the land,
And guardian angels sung this strain :

*" Rule Britannia, rule the waves ;
" Britons never will be slaves."*

The nations, not so blest as thee,
Must in their turns to tyrants fall ;
While thou shalt flourish, great and free,
The dread and envy of them all.

" Rule, &c."

Still more majestic shalt thou rise,
More dreadful from each foreign stroke ;
As the loud blast, that tears the skies,
Serves but to root thy native oak.

" Rule, &c."

Thee haughty tyrants ne'er shall tame :
All their attempts to bend thee down
Will but arouse thy generous flame ;
But work their woe, and thy renown.

" Rule, &c."

To thee belongs the rural reign ;
Thy cities shall with commerce shine :
All thine shall be the subject main ;
And every shore it circles, thine.

" Rule, &c."

The muses, still with freedom found,
Shall to thy happy coast repair :
Blest isle ! with matchless beauty crown'd,
And manly hearts to guard the fair.

*" Rule, Britannia, rule the waves ;
" Britons never will be slaves."*

Her. Alfred, go forth ! lead on the radiant
years,

To thee reveal'd in vision.—Lo ! they rise !
Lo ! patriots, heroes, sages, crowd to birth :
And bards to sing them in immortal verse !
I see thy commerce, Britain, grasp the world :
All nations serve thee ; every foreign flood,
Subjected, pays its tribute to the Thames.
Thither the golden south obedient pours
His sunny treasures ; thither the soft east
Her spices, delicacies, gentle gifts ;
And thither his rough trade the stormy north.
See, where beyond the vast Atlantic surge,
By boldest keels untouch'd, a dreadful space !
Shores, yet unbound, arise ! in youthful prime,
With towering forests, mighty rivers crown'd :
These stoop to Britain's thunder. This new
world,
Shook to its centre, trembles at her name :
And there her sons, with aim exalted, sow
The seeds of rising empire, arts, and arms.

Britons, proceed, the subject deep command,
Awe with your navies every hostile land.
Vain are their threats, their armies all are vain :
They rule the balanced world, who rule the main.

TANCRED AND SIGISMUNDA.

A Tragedy.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS play is considerably shortened in the performance; but I hope it will not be disagreeable to the reader to see it as it was at first written, there being a great difference betwixt a play in the closet and upon the stage.

TO

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS FREDERICK PRINCE OF WALES.

SIR,

The honour your Royal Highness has done me in the protection you was pleased to give to this tragedy, emboldens me to lay it now at your feet, and beg your permission to publish it under your royal patronage. The favouring and protecting of letters has been, in all ages and countries, one distinguishing mark of a great prince; and that with good reason, not only as it shows a justness of taste and elevation of mind, but as the influence of such a protection, by exciting good writers to labour with more emulation in the improvement of their several talents, not a little contributes to the embellishment and instruction of society. But of all the different species of writing, none has such an effect upon the lives and manners of men as the dramatic; and, therefore, that of all others most deserves the attention of princes; who, by a judicious approbation of such pieces as tend to promote all public and private virtue, may, more than by any coercive methods, secure the purity of the stage, and, in consequence thereof, greatly advance the morals and politeness of their people. How eminently your Royal Highness has always extended your favour and patronage to every art and science, and in a particular manner to dramatic performances, is too well known to the world for me to mention it here. Allow me only to wish, that what I have now the honour to offer to your Royal Highness may be judged not unworthy of your protection, at least in the sentiments which it inculcates. A warm and grateful sense of your goodness to me makes me desirous to seize every occasion of declaring in public with what profound respect and dutiful attachment I am, Sir,

Your Royal Highness's most obliged, most obedient, and most devoted servant,

JAMES THOMSON.

PROLOGUE.

BOLD is the man ! who, in this nicer age,
Presumes to tread the chaste corrected stage.
Now, with gay tinsel arts, we can no more
Conceal the want of nature's sterling ore.
Our spells are vanish'd, broke our magic wand,
That used to waft you over sea and land.
Before your light the fairy people fade,
The demons fly—the ghost itself is laid.

In vain of martial scenes the loud alarms,
The mighty prompter thundering out to arms,
The playhouse posse clattering from afar,
The close-wedged battle, and the din of war.
Now, even the senate seldom we convene;
The yawning fathers nod behind the scene.
Your taste rejects the glittering false sublime,
To sigh in metaphor, and die in rhyme.

High rant is tumbled from his gallery throne :
Description dreams—nay, similes are gone.

What shall we then ? to please you how devise,
Whose judgment sits not in your ears and eyes ?
Thrice happy ! could we catch great Shakspeare's
art,
To trace the deep recesses of the heart ;

His simple plain sublime, to which is given
To strike the soul with darted flame from heaven:
Could we awake soft Otway's tender woe,
The pomp of verse and golden lines of Rowe.

We to your hearts apply : let them attend ;
Before their silent candid bar we bend.
If warm'd, they listen, 'tis our noblest praise ;
If cold, they wither all the muse's bays.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

TANCRED, *Count of Lecce.*

MATTEO SIFFREDI, *Lord High Chancellor of Sicily.*

EARL OSMOND, *Lord High Constable of Sicily.*

RODOLPHO, *friend to Tancred, and Captain of the
Guards.*

SIGISMUNDA, *daughter of Siffredi.*

LAURA, *sister of Rodolpho, and friend to Sigis-
munda.*

Barons, Officers, Guards, &c.

SCENE.—*The City of Palermo, in Sicily.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.

SIGISMUNDA, LAURA.

Sigis. AH fatal day to Sicily ! The king
Approaches his last moments !

Lau. So 'tis fear'd.
Sigis. The death of those distinguish'd by their
station,

But by their virtue more, awakes the mind
To solemn dread, and strikes a saddening awe :
Not that we grieve for them, but for ourselves,
Left to the toil of life—And yet the best
Are, by the playful children of this world,
At once forgot, as they had never been.

Laura, 'tis said—the heart is sometimes charged
With a prophetic sadness : such, methinks,
Now hangs on mine. The king's approaching
death

Suggests a thousand fears. What troubles thence
May throw the state once more into confusion,
What sudden changes in my father's house
May rise, and part me from my dearest Tancred,
Alarms my thought.

Lau. The fears of love-sick fancy !
Perversely busy to torment itself.

But be assured, your father's steady friendship,
Join'd to a certain genius, that commands,
Not kneels to fortune, will support and cherish,
Here in the public eye of Sicily,
This—I may call him—his adopted son,
The noble Tancred, form'd to all his virtues.

Sigis. Ah, form'd to charm his daughter !—This
fair morn

Has tempted far the chase. Is he not yet
Return'd ?

Lau. No.—When your father to the king,
Who now expiring lies, was call'd in haste,
He sent each way his messengers to find him ;
With such a look of ardour and impatience,
As if this near event was to count Tancred
Of more importance than I comprehend.

Sigis. There lies, my Laura, o'er my Tancred's
birth

A cloud I cannot pierce. With princely cost,
Nay, with respect, which oft I have observed,
Stealing at times submissive o'er his features,
In Belmont's woods my father rear'd this youth—
Ah woods ! where first my artless bosom learnt
The sighs of love.—He gives him out the son
Of an old friend, a baron of Apulia,
Who in the late crusado bravely fell.

But then 'tis strange ; is all his family
As well as father dead ? and all their friends,
Except my sire, the generous good Siffredi ?
Had he a mother, sister, brother, left,
The last remain of kindred ; with what pride,
What rapture, might they fly o'er earth and sea,
To claim this rising honour of their blood !
This bright unknown ! this all-accomplish'd youth !
Who charms—too much—the heart of Sigismunda !

Laura, perhaps your brother knows him better,
The friend and partner of his freest hours.
What says Rodolpho ? Does he truly credit
This story of his birth ?

Lau. He has sometimes,
Like you, his doubts ; yet when maturely weigh'd,
Believes it true. As for lord Tancred's self,
He never entertain'd the slightest thought
That verged to doubt ; but oft laments his state,
By cruel fortune so ill-pair'd to yours.

Sigis. Merit like his, the fortune of the mind,
Beggars all wealth—Then, to your brother, Laura,
He talks of me ?

Lau. Of nothing else. Howe'er
The talk begin, it ends with Sigismunda.
Their morning, noontide, and their evening walks
Are full of you ; and all the woods of Belmont
Enamour'd with your name—

Sigis. Away ! my friend ;
You flatter—Yet the dear delusion charms.

Lau. No, Sigismunda, 'tis the strictest truth,
Nor half the truth, I tell you. Even with fondness

My brother talks for ever of the passion
That fires young Tancred's breast. So much it
He praises love as if he were a lover. [strikes him,
He blames the false pursuits of vagrant youth,
Calls them gay folly, a mistaken struggle
Against best-judging nature. Heaven, he says,
In lavish bounty form'd the heart for love ;
In love included all the finer seeds
Of honour, virtue, friendship, purest bliss——

Sigis. Virtuous Rodolpho !

Lau. Then his pleasing theme
He varies to the praises of your lover——

Sigis. And what, my Laura, says he on the
subject ?

Lau. He says, that, though he were not nobly
born,

Nature has form'd him noble, generous, brave,
Truly magnanimous, and warmly scorning
Whatever bears the smallest taint of baseness :
That every easy virtue is his own ;
Not learnt by painful labour, but inspired,
Implanted in his soul—Chiefly one charm
He in his graceful character observes ;
That though his passions burn with high impatience,
And sometimes, from a noble heat of nature,
Are ready to fly off ; yet the least check
Of ruling reason brings them back to temper,
And gentle softness.

Sigis. True ! oh true, Rodolpho !
Blest be thy kindred worth for loving his !
He is all warmth, all amiable fire,
All quick heroic ardour ! temper'd soft
With gentleness of heart, and manly reason !
If virtue were to wear a human form,
To light it with her dignity and flame,
Then softening mix her smiles and tender graces ;
Oh, she would choose the person of my Tancred !
Go on, my friend, go on, and ever praise him ;
The subject knows no bounds, nor can I tire,
While my breast trembles to that sweetest music !
The heart of woman tastes no truer joy,
Is never flatter'd with such dear enchantment—
'Tis more than selfish vanity—as when
She hears the praises of the man she loves——

Lau. Madam, your father comes.

SCENE II.

SIFFREDI, SIGISMUNDA, LAURA.

Sif. [To an Attendant as he enters.
Lord Tancred then

Is found ?

Atten. My lord, he quickly will be here.
I scarce could keep before him, though he bid me
Speed on, to say he would attend your orders.

Sif. 'Tis well—retire—You, too, my daughter,
leave me.

Sigis. I go, my father. But how fares the king ?

Sif. He is no more. Gone to that awful state,
Where kings the crown wear only of their virtues.

Sigis. How bright must then be his !—This
stroke is sudden.

He was this morning well, when to the chase
Lord Tancred went.

Sif. 'Tis true. But at his years
Death gives short notice—Drooping nature then,
Without a gust of pain to shake it, falls.

His death, my daughter, was that happy period

Which few attain. The duties of his day
Were all discharged, and gratefully enjoy'd
Its noblest blessings ; calm as evening skies,
Was his pure mind, and lighted up with hopes
That open heaven ; when, for his last long sleep
Timely prepared, a lassitude of life,
A pleasing weariness of mortal joy,
Fell on his soul, and down he sunk to rest.
Oh, may my death be such !—He but one wish
Left unfulfill'd, which was to see count Tancred——

Sigis. To see count Tancred !—Pardon me, my
lord——

Sif. For what, my daughter ?—But, with such
emotion,

Why did you start at mention of count Tancred ?

Sigis. Nothing—I only hoped the dying king
Might mean to make some generous just provision
For this your worthy charge, this noble orphan.

Sif. And he has done it largely—Leave me
now——

I want some private conference with lord Tancred.

SCENE III.

Sif. (alone.) My doubts are but too true—If
these old eyes

Can trace the marks of love, a mutual passion
Has seized, I fear, my daughter and this prince,
My sovereign now—Should it be so ? Ah, there,
There lurks a brooding tempest, that may shake
My long-concerted scheme, to settle firm
The public peace and welfare, which the king
Has made the prudent basis of his will——
Away ! unworthy views ! you shall not tempt me !
Nor interest nor ambition shall seduce
My fix'd resolve——Perish the selfish thought,
Which our own good prefers to that of millions !—
He comes—my king—unconscious of his fortune.

SCENE IV.

TANCRED, SIFFREDI.

Tan. My lord Siffredi, in your looks I read,
Confirm'd, the mournful news that fly abroad
From tongue to tongue—We then, at last, have lost
The good old king ?

Sif. Yes, we have lost a father !
The greatest blessing Heaven bestows on mortals,
And seldom found amidst these wilds of time ;
A good, a worthy king !—Hear me, my Tancred,
And I will tell thee, in a few plain words,
How he deserved that best, that glorious title :
'Tis nought complex, 'tis clear as truth and virtue.
He loved his people, deem'd them all his children ;
The good exalted, and depress'd the bad.
He spurn'd the flattering crew, with scorn rejected
Their smooth advice that only means themselves,
Their schemes to aggrandise him into baseness :
Nor did he less disdain the secret breath,
The whisper'd tale, that blights a virtuous name.
He sought alone the good of those for whom
He was entrusted with the sovereign power :
Well knowing that a people in their rights
And industry protected ; living safe
Beneath the sacred shelter of the laws,
Encouraged in their genius, arts, and labours,
And happy each as he himself deserves,

Are ne'er ungrateful. With unsparing hand
They will for him provide : their filial love
And confidence are his unfailing treasure,
And every honest man his faithful guard.

Tan. A general face of grief o'erspreads the
I mark'd the people, as I hither came, [city.
In crowds assembled, struck with silent sorrow,
And pouring forth the noblest praise of tears.
Those whom remembrance of their former woes,
And long experience of the vain illusions
Of youthful hope, had into wise consent
And fear of change corrected, wrung their hands,
And often casting up their eyes to heaven,
Gave sign of sad conjecture. Others show'd,
Athwart their grief, or real or affected,
A gleam of expectation, from what chance
And change might bring. A mingled murmur ran
Along the streets ; and, from the lonely court
Of him who can no more assist their fortunes,
I saw the courtier-fry, with eager haste,
All hurrying to Constantia.

Sif. Noble youth !
I joy to hear from thee these just reflections,
Worthy of riper years—But if they seek
Constantia, trust me, they mistake their course.

Tan. How ! is she not, my lord, the late king's
sister,

Heir to the crown of Sicily ? the last
Of our famed Norman line, and now our queen ?

Sif. Tancred, 'tis true ; she is the late king's
sister,

The sole surviving offspring of that tyrant
William the Bad—so for his vices styled ;
Who spilt much noble blood, and sore oppress'd
The exhausted land : whence grievous wars arose,
And many a dire convulsion shook the state,
When he, whose death Sicilia mourns to-day,
William, who has and well deserved the name
Of Good, succeeding to his father's throne,
Relieved his country's woes—But to return—
She is the late king's sister, born some months
After the tyrant's death, but not next heir.

Tan. You much surprise me—May I then pre-
To ask who is ? [sume

Sif. Come nearer, noble Tancred,
Son of my care ! I must, on this occasion,
Consult thy generous heart ; which, when conducted
By rectitude of mind and honest virtues,
Gives better counsel than the hoary head—
Then know, there lives a prince, here in Palermo,
The lineal offspring of our famous hero,
Roger the First.

Tan. Great Heaven !—How far removed
From that our mighty founder ?

Sif. His great-grandson :
Sprung from his eldest son, who died untimely,
Before his father.

Tan. Ha ! the prince you mean,
Is he not Manfred's son ? The generous, brave,
Unhappy Manfred ! whom the tyrant William
You just now mention'd, not content to spoil
Of his paternal crown, threw into fetters,
And infamously murder'd ?

Sif. Yes—the same.

Tan. By Heavens ! I joy to find our Norman
reign,

The world's sole light amidst these barbarous ages !
Yet rears its head ; and shall not, from the lance,
Pass to the feeble distaff—But this prince,
Where has he lain conceal'd ?

Sif.

The late good king,

By noble pity moved, contrived to save him
From his dire father's unrelenting rage,
And had him rear'd in private, as became
His birth and hopes, with high and princely nurture.
Till now, too young to rule a troubled state,
By civil broils most miserably torn,
He in his safe retreat has lain conceal'd,
His birth and fortune to himself unknown ;
But when the dying king to me entrusted,
As to the chancellor of the realm, his will,
His successor he named him.

Tan.

Happy youth !

He then will triumph o'er his father's foes,
O'er haughty Osmond, and the tyrant's daughter.

Sif. Ay, that is what I dread—that heat of
youth ;

There lurks, I fear, perdition to the state.
I dread the horrors of rekindled war :
Though dead, the tyrant still is to be fear'd ;
His daughter's party still is strong, and numerous :
Her friend, earl Osmond, constable of Sicily,
Experienced, brave, high-born, of mighty interest.
Better the prince and princess should by marriage
Unite their friends, their interest and their claims ;
Then will the peace and welfare of the land
On a firm basis rise.

Tan.

My lord Siffredi,

If by myself I of this prince may judge,
That scheme will scarce succeed—Your prudent
In vain will counsel, if the heart forbid it— [age
But wherefore fear ? The right is clearly his ;
And, under your direction, with each man
Of worth, and steadfast loyalty, to back
At once the king's appointment and his birthright,
There is no ground for fear. They have great odds,
Against the astonish'd sons of violence,
Who fight with awful justice on their side.
All Sicily will rouse, all faithful hearts
Will range themselves around prince Manfred's
For me, I here devote me to the service [son.
Of this young prince ; I every drop of blood
Will lose with joy, with transport in his cause—
Pardon my warmth—but that, my lord, will never
To this decision come—Then find the prince ;
Lose not a moment to awaken in him
The royal soul. Perhaps he now desponding
Pines in a corner, and laments his fortune ;
That in the narrower bounds of private life
He must confine his aims, those swelling virtues
Which from his noble father he inherits.

Sif. Perhaps, regardless, in the common bane
Of youth he melts, in vanity and love.

But if the seeds of virtue glow within him,
I will awake a higher sense, a love
That grasps the loves and happiness of millions.

Tan. Why that surmise ? Or should he love,
Siffredi,

I doubt not, it is nobly, which will raise
And animate his virtues—Oh, permit me
To plead the cause of youth—Their virtue oft
In pleasure's soft enchantment lull'd a while
Forgets itself ; it sleeps and gaily dreams,
Till great occasion rouse it : then all flame,
It walks abroad, with heighten'd soul and vigour,
And by the change astonishes the world.
Even with a kind of sympathy, I feel
The joy that waits this prince ; when all the powers,
The expanding heart can wish, of doing good ;
Whatever swells ambition, or exalts

The human soul into divine emotions,
All crowd at once upon him.

Sif. Ah, my Tancred,
Nothing so easy as in speculation,
And at a distance seen, the course of honour,
A fair delightful champain strew'd with flowers.
But when the practice comes; when our fond
passions,

Pleasure, and pride, and self-indulgence, throw
Their magic dust around, the prospect roughens :
Then dreadful passes, craggy mountains rise,
Cliffs to be scaled, and torrents to be stemm'd :
Then toil ensues, and perseverance stern ;
And endless combats with our grosser sense,
Oft lost, and oft renew'd ; and generous pain
For others felt ; and, harder lesson still !
Our honest bliss for others sacrificed ;
And all the rugged task of virtue quails
The stoutest heart of common resolution.
Few get above this turbid scene of strife.
Few gain the summit, breathe that purest air,
That heavenly ether, which untroubled sees
The storm of vice and passion rage below.

Tan. Most true, my lord. But why thus augur ill?
You seem to doubt this prince. I know him not.
Yet oh, methinks, my heart could answer for him !
The juncture is so high, so strong the gale
That blows from heaven, as through the dearest soul
Might breathe the godlike energy of virtue.

Sif. Hear him, immortal shades of his great
fathers !—

Forgive me, sir, this trial of your heart :
Thou ! thou art he !

Tan. Siffredi !

Sif. Tancred, thou !

Thou art the man, of all the many thousands
That toil upon the bosom of this isle,
By Heaven elected to command the rest,
To rule, protect them, and to make them happy !

Tan. Manfred my father ! I the last support
Of the famed Norman line, that awes the world !
I ! who this morning wander'd forth an orphan,
Outcast of all but thee, my second father !
Thus call'd to glory ! to the first great lot
Of human kind ! O wonder-working Hand
That, in majestic silence, sways at will
The mighty movements of unbounded nature ;
Oh, grant me, Heaven ! the virtues to sustain
This awful burden of so many heroes !
Let me not be exalted into shame,
Set up the worthless pageant of vain grandeur.

Meantime I thank the justice of the king,
Who has my right bequeath'd me. Thee, Siffredi,
I thank thee—Oh, I ne'er enough can thank thee !
Yes, thou hast been—thou art—shalt be my father !
Thou shalt direct my unexperienced years,
Shalt be the ruling head, and I the hand.

Sif. It is enough for me—to see my sovereign
Assert his virtues, and maintain his honour.

Tan. I think, my lord, you said the king committed
To you his will. I hope it is not clogg'd
With any base conditions, any clause,
To tyrannise my heart, and to Constantia
Enslave my hand devoted to another.
The hint you just now gave of that alliance,
You must imagine, wakes my fear. But know,
In this alone I will not bear dispute,
Not even from thee, Siffredi !—Let the council
Be straight assembled, and the will there open'd :
Thence issue speedy orders to convene,

This day ere noon, the senate : where those barons,
Who now are in Palermo, will attend,
To pay their ready homage to the king,
Their rightful king, who claims his native crown,
And will not be a king by deeds and parchments.

Sif. I go, my liege. But once again permit me
To tell you—Now, now, is the trying crisis,
That must determine of your future reign.
Oh, with heroic rigour watch your heart !
And to the sovereign duties of the king,
The unequal'd pleasures of a god on earth,
Submit the common joys, the common passions—
Nay, even the virtues of the private man.

Tan. Of that no more. They not oppose, but aid,
Invigorate, cherish, and reward each other.
The kind all-ruling Wisdom is no tyrant.

SCENE V.

Tan. (alone.) Now, generous Sigismunda, comes
my turn

To show my love was not of thine unworthy,
When fortune bade me blush to look to thee.
But what is fortune to the wish of love ?
A miserable bankrupt ! Oh, 'tis poor,
'Tis scanty all, whate'er we can bestow !
The wealth of kings is wretchedness and want !—
Quick, let me find her ! taste that highest joy,
The exalted heart can know, the mix'd effusion
Of gratitude and love !—Behold, she comes !

SCENE VI.

TANCRED, SIGISMUNDA.

Tan. My fluttering soul was all on wing to find
My love ! my Sigismunda ! [thee,

Sigis. Oh, my Tancred !
Tell me, what means this mystery and gloom
That lowers around ? Just now, involved in thought,
My father shot athwart me—You, my lord,
Seem strangely moved—I fear some dark event
From the king's death to trouble our repose,
That tender calm we in the woods of Belmont
So happily enjoy'd—Explain this hurry,
What means it ? Say.

Tan. It means that we are happy !
Beyond our most romantic wishes happy !

Sigis. You but perplex me more.

Tan. It means, my fairest !
That thou art queen of Sicily, and I
The happiest of mankind ! than monarch more !
Because with thee I can adorn my throne.
Manfred, who fell by tyrant William's rage,
Famed Roger's lineal issue, was my father. [Pausing.

You droop, my love ; dejected on a sudden ;
You seem to mourn my fortune—The soft tear
Springs in thy eye—Oh, let me kiss it off—
Why this, my Sigismunda ?

Sigis. Royal Tancred,
None at your glorious fortune can like me
Rejoice ;—yet me alone, of all Sicilians,
It makes unhappy.

Tan. I should hate it then !
Should throw, with scorn, the splendid ruin from
me !—

No, Sigismunda, 'tis my hope with thee
To share it, whence it draws its richest value.

Sigis. You are my sovereign—I at humble distance—

Tan. Thou art my queen ! the sovereign of my soul !

You never reign'd with such triumphant lustre,
Such winning charms as now ; yet, thou art still
The dear, the tender, generous Sigismunda !
Who, with a heart exalted far above
Those selfish views that charm the common breast,
Stoop'd from the height of life and courted beauty,
Then, then, to love me, when I seem'd of fortune
The hopeless outcast, when I had no friend,
None to protect and own me but thy father.
And wouldst thou claim all goodness to thyself ?
Canst thou thy Tancred deem so dully form'd,
Of such gross clay, just as I reach the point—
A point my wildest hopes could never image—
In that great moment, full of every virtue,
That I should then so mean a traitor prove
To the best bliss and honour of mankind,
So much disgrace the human heart, as then,
For the dead form of flattery and pomp,
The faithless joys of courts, to quit kind truth,
The cordial sweets of friendship and of love,
The life of life ! my all, my Sigismunda !
I could upbraid thy fears, call them unkind,
Cruel, unjust, an outrage to my heart,
Did they not spring from love.

Sigis. Think not, my lord,
That to such vulgar doubts I can descend.
Your heart, I know, disdains the little thought
Of changing with the vain external change
Of circumstance and fortune. Rather thence
It would, with rising ardour, greatly feel
A noble pride to show itself the same.
But, ah ! the hearts of kings are not their own :
There is a haughty duty that subjects them
To chains of state, to wed the public welfare,
And not indulge the tender private virtues.
Some high-descended princess, who will bring
New power and interest to your throne, demands
Your royal hand—perhaps Constantia—

Tan. She !
Oh, name her not ! Were I this moment free,
And disengaged as he who never felt
The powerful eye of beauty, never sigh'd
For matchless worth like thine, I should abhor
All thoughts of that alliance. Her fell father
Most basely murder'd mine ; and she, his daughter,
Supported by his barbarous party still,
His pride inherits, his imperious spirit,
And insolent pretensions to my throne.
And canst thou deem me then so poorly tame,
So cool a traitor to my father's blood,
As from the prudent cowardice of state
E'er to submit to such a base proposal ?
Detested thought ! Oh, doubly, doubly hateful !
From the two strongest passions ; from aversion
To this Constantia—and from love to thee.

Custom, 'tis true, a venerable tyrant,
O'er servile man extends her blind dominion :
The pride of kings enslaves them ; their ambition,
Or interest, lords it o'er the better passions.
But vain their talk, mask'd under specious words
Of station, duty, and of public good :
They whom just Heaven has to a throne exalted,
To guard the rights and liberties of others,
What duty binds them to betray their own ?
For me, my free-born heart shall bear no dictates,
But those of truth and honour ; wear no chains,
But the dear chains of love and Sigismunda !
Or if indeed my choice must be directed
By views of public good, whom shall I chuse
So fit to grace, to dignify a crown,
And beam sweet mercy on a happy people,
As thee, my love ? whom place upon my throne
But thee, descended from the good Siffredi ?
'Tis fit that heart be thine, which drew from him
Whate'er can make it worthy thy acceptance.

Sigis. Cease, cease, to raise my hopes above my duty.

Charm me no more, my Tancred !—O that we
In those blest woods, where first you won my soul,
Had pass'd our gentle days ; far from the toil
And pomp of courts ! Such is the wish of love ;
Of love, that, with delightful weakness, knows
No bliss and no ambition but itself.
But, in the world's full light, those charming
dreams,

Those fond illusions vanish. Awful duties,
The tyranny of men, even your own heart,
Where lurks a sense your passion stifles now,
And proud imperious honour, call you from me.
'Tis all in vain—You cannot hush a voice
That murmurs here—I must not be persuaded !

Tan. (*kneeling.*) Hear me, thou soul of all my hopes and wishes !

And witness, Heaven ! prime source of love and joy !
Not a whole warring world combined against me ;
Its pride, its splendour, its imposing forms,
Nor interest, nor ambition, nor the face
Of solemn state, not even thy father's wisdom,
Shall ever shake my faith to Sigismunda !

[*Trumpets and acclamations heard.*]

But, hark ! the public voice to duties calls me,
Which with unwearied zeal I will discharge ;
And thou, yes thou, shalt be my bright reward—
Yet—ere I go—to hush thy lovely fears,
Thy delicate objections—

[*Writes his name.*]

Take this blank,
Sign'd with my name, and give it to thy father :
Tell him, 'tis my command it be fill'd up
With a most strict and solemn marriage-contract.
How dear each tie ! how charming to my soul !
That more unites me to my Sigismunda.

For thee and for my people's good to live,
Is all the bliss which sovereign power can give.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Sif. (alone.) So far 'tis well—The late king's will proceeds

Upon the plan I counsel'd ; that prince Tancred
Shall make Constantia partner of his throne.
O great, O wish'd event ! whence the dire seeds
Of dark intestine broils, of civil war,
And all its dreadful miseries and crimes,
Shall be for ever rooted from the land.
May these dim eyes, long blasted by the rage
Of cruel faction and my country's woes,
Tired with the toils and vanities of life,
Behold this period, then be closed in peace !

But how this mighty obstacle surmount,
Which love has thrown betwixt ? Love, that disturbs
The schemes of wisdom still ; that, wing'd with
Blind and impetuous in its fond pursuits, [passion,
Leaves the grey-headed reason far behind.
Alas ! how frail the state of human bliss !
When even our honest passions oft destroy it.
I was to blame, in solitude and shades,
Infectious scenes ! to trust their youthful hearts.
Would I had mark'd the rising flame ! that now
Burns out with dangerous force—My daughter owns
Her passion for the king ; she trembling own'd it,
With prayers and tears and tender supplications,
That almost shook my firmness—And this blank,
Which his rash fondness gave her, shows how much,
To what a wild extravagance he loves—
I see no means—it foils my deepest thought—
How to control this madness of the king,
That wears the face of virtue, and will thence
Disdain restraint, will from his generous heart
Borrow new rage, even speciously oppose
To reason reason—But it must be done.
My own advice, of which I more and more
Approve, the strict conditions of the will,
Highly demand his marriage with Constantia ;
Or else her party has a fair pretence—
And all, at once, is horror and confusion—
How issue from this maze ?—The crowding barons,
Here summon'd to the palace, meet already,
To pay their homage, and confirm the will.
On a few moments hangs the public fate,
On a few hasty moments—Ha ! there shone
A gleam of hope—Yes—with this very paper
I yet will save him—Necessary means
For good and noble ends can ne'er be wrong.
In that resistless, that peculiar case,
Deceit is truth and virtue—But how hold
This lion in the toil ?—Oh, I will form it
Of such a fatal thread, twist it so strong
With all the ties of honour and of duty,
That his most desperate fury shall not break
The honest snare—Here is the royal hand—
I will beneath it write a perfect, full,
And absolute agreement to the will ;
Which read before the nobles of the realm
Assembled, in the sacred face of Sicily,
Constantia present, every heart and eye
Fix'd on their monarch, every tongue applauding,
He must submit, his dream of love must vanish—

It shall be done ?—To me, I know, 'tis ruin ;
But safety to the public, to the king.
I will not reason more, I will not listen
Even to the voice of honour—No—'tis fix'd !
I here devote me for my prince and country ;
Let them be safe, and let me nobly perish !
Behold earl Osmond comes ; without his aid
My schemes are all in vain.

SCENE II.

OSMOND, SIFFREDI.

Osm. My lord Siffredi,
I from the council hasten'd to Constantia,
And have accomplish'd what we there proposed.
The princess to the will submits her claims.
She with her presence means to grace the senate,
And of your royal charge young Tancred's hand
Accept. At first, indeed it shock'd her hopes
Of reigning sole, this new surprising scene
Of Manfred's son, appointed by the king,
With her, joint heir—But I so fully show'd
The justice of the case, the public good
And sure establish'd peace which thence would rise,
Join'd to the strong necessity that urged her,
If on Sicilia's throne she meant to sit,
As to the wise disposal of the will
Her high ambition tamed. Methought, besides,
I could discern that not from prudence merely
She to this choice submitted.

Sif. Noble Osmond,
You have in this done to the public great
And signal service. Yes, I must avow it ;
This frank and ready instance of your zeal,
In such a trying crisis of the state,
When interest and ambition might have warp'd
Your views ; I own, this truly generous virtue
Upbraids the rashness of my former judgment.
Osm. Siffredi, no.—To you belongs the praise ;
The glorious work is yours. Had I not seized,
Improved the wish'd occasion to root out
Division from the land, and save my country,
I had been base, been infamous for ever.
'Tis you, my lord, to whom the many thousands,
That by the barbarous sword of civil war
Had fallen inglorious, owe their lives ; to you
The sons of this fair isle, from her first peers
Down to the swain who tills her golden plains,
Owe their safe homes, their soft domestic hours ;
And through late time posterity shall bless you,
You who advised this will—I blush to think
I have so long opposed the best good man
In Sicily—With what impartial care
Ought we to watch o'er prejudice and passion,
Nor trust too much the jaundiced eye of party !
Henceforth its vain delusions I renounce,
Its hot determinations, that confine
All merit and all virtue to itself.
To yours I join my hand ; with you will own
No interest and no party but my country.
Nor is your friendship only my ambition :

There is a dearer name, the name of father,
By which I should rejoice to call Siffredi.
Your daughter's hand would to the public weal
Unite my private happiness.

Sif. My lord,
You have my glad consent. To be allied
To your distinguish'd family, and merit,
I shall esteem an honour. From my soul,
I here embrace earl Osmond as my friend,
And son.

Osm. You make him happy. This assent,
So frank and warm, to what I long have wish'd,
Engages all my gratitude ; at once,
In the first blossom, it matures our friendship.
I from this moment vow myself the friend
And zealous servant of Siffredi's house.

Enter an Officer belonging to the Court.

Off. to Sif. The king, my lord, demands your
speedy presence. [lord :

Sif. I will attend him straight—Farewell, my
The senate meets : there, a few moments hence,
I will rejoin you.

Osm. There, my noble lord,
We will complete this salutary work.
Will there begin a new auspicious era.

SCENE III.

Osm. (alone.) Siffredi gives his daughter to my
wishes—

But does she give herself ? Gay, young, and flatter'd,
Perhaps engaged, will she her youthful heart
Yield to my harsher uncomplaining years ?
I am not form'd by flattery and praise,
By sighs and tears, and all the whining trade
Of love, to feed a fair one's vanity ;
To charm at once and spoil her. These soft arts
Nor suit my years nor temper ; these be left
To boys and doating age. A prudent father,
By nature charged to guide and rule her choice,
Resigns his daughter to a husband's power,
Who with superior dignity, with reason,
And manly tenderness will ever love her ;
Not first a kneeling slave, and then a tyrant.

SCENE IV.

OSMOND, BARONS.

Osm. Mylords, I greet you well. This wondrous
Unites us all in amity and friendship. [day
We meet to-day with open hearts, and looks
Not gloom'd by party scowling on each other,
But all the children of one happy isle,
The social sons of liberty. No pride,
No passion now, no thwarting views divide us :
Prince Manfred's line, at last, to William's join'd,
Combines us in one family of brothers.
This to the late good king's well-order'd will,
And wise Siffredi's generous care, we owe.
I truly give you joy. First of you all,
I here renounce those errors and divisions
That have so long disturb'd our peace, and seem'd,
Fermenting still, to threaten new commotions—
By time instructed let us not disdain
To quit mistakes. We all, my lords, have err'd.
Men may, I find, be honest, though they differ.

1st Baron. Who follows not, my lord, the fair
You set us all, whate'er be his pretence, [example
Loves not with single and unbiass'd heart
His country as he ought.

2nd Baron. O beauteous Peace !
Sweet union of a state ! What else, but thou,
Gives safety, strength, and glory to a people !
I bow, lord constable, beneath the snow
Of many years ; yet in my breast revives
A youthful flame. Methinks, I see again
Those gentle days renew'd, that bless'd our isle,
Ere by this wasteful fury of division,
Worse than our *Ætna's* most destructive fires,
It desolated sunk. I see our plains
Unbounded waving with the gifts of harvest ;
Our seas with commerce throng'd, our busy ports
With cheerful toil. Our Enna blooms afresh ;
Afresh the sweets of thymy Hybla flow.
Our nymphs and shepherds, sporting in each vale,
Inspire new song, and wake the pastoral reed—
The tongue of age is fond—Come, come, my sons ;
I long to see this prince, of whom the world
Speaks largely well—His father was my friend,
The brave unhappy Manfred—Come, my lords ;
We tarry here too long.

SCENE V.

Two Officers keeping off the Crowd.

One of the Crowd. Show us our king,
The valiant Manfred's son, who loved the people—
We must, we will behold him—Give us way.

1st Off. Pray, gentlemen, give back—it must not
Give back, I pray—on such a glad occasion [be—
I would not ill entreat the lowest of you.

2nd Man of the Crowd. Nay, give us but a
glimpse of our young king.

We more than any baron of them all
Will pay him true allegiance.

2nd Off. Friends—indeed—
You cannot pass this way—We have strict orders,
To keep for him himself, and for the barons,
All these apartments clear—Go to the gate
That fronts the sea—You there will find admission.

All. Long live king Tancred ! Manfred's son—
Huzza ! [Crowd goes off.

1st Off. I do not marvel at their rage of joy :
He is a brave and amiable prince.
When in my lord Siffredi's house I lived,
Ere by his favour I obtain'd this office,
I there remember well the young count Tancred.
To see him and to love him were the same.
He was so noble in his ways, yet still
So affable and mild—Well, well, old Sicily,
Yet happy days await thee !

2nd Off. Grant it, Heaven !
We have seen sad and troublous times enough.
He is, they say, to wed the late king's sister,
Constancia.

1st Off. Friend, of that I greatly doubt.
Or I mistake, or lord Siffredi's daughter,
The gentle Sigismunda, has his heart.
If one may judge by kindly cordial looks,
And fond assiduous care to please each other,
Most certainly they love—Oh, be they blest,
As they deserve ! It were great pity aught
Should part a matchless pair : the glory he,
And she the blooming grace of Sicily !

2nd Off. My lord Rodolpho comes.

SCENE VI.

RODOLPHO, *from the Senate.*

Rod. My honest friends,
You may retire. [Officers go out.]

A storm is in the wind.
This will perplexes all. No, Tancred never
Can stoop to these conditions, which at once
Attack his rights, his honour, and his love. [dants,
Those wise old men, those plodding grave state pe-
Forget the course of youth; their crooked prudence,
To baseness verging still, forgets to take
Into their fine-spun schemes the generous heart,
That through the cobweb system bursting lays
Their labours waste—So will this business prove,
Or I mistake the king—back from the pomp
He seem'd at first to shrink; and round his brow
I mark'd a gathering cloud, when by his side,
As if design'd to share the public homage,
He saw the tyrant's daughter. But confess'd,
At least to me, the doubling tempest frown'd,
And shook his swelling bosom, when he heard
The unjust, the base conditions of the will.
Uncertain, tost in cruel agitation,
He oft, methought, address'd himself to speak
And interrupt Siffredi; who appear'd,
With conscious haste, to dread that interruption,
And hurried on—But hark! I hear a noise,
As if the assembly rose—Ha! Sigismunda,
Oppress'd with grief and wrapt in pensive sorrow,
Passes along—

[SIGISMUNDA and Attendants pass through the back
scene. LAURA advances.]

SCENE VII.

RODOLPHO, LAURA.

Lau. Your high-praised friend, the king,
Is false, most vilely false! The meanest slave
Had shown a nobler heart; nor grossly thus,
By the first bait ambition spread, been gull'd.
He Manfred's son! away! it cannot be!
The son of that brave prince could ne'er betray
Those rights so long usurp'd from his great fathers,
Which he, this day, by such amazing fortune,
Had just regain'd; he ne'er could sacrifice
All faith, all honour, gratitude, and love,
Even just resentment of his father's fate,
And pride itself, whate'er exalts a man
Above the groveling sons of peasant-mud,
All in a moment—And for what? why truly,
For kind permission, gracious leave, to sit
On his own throne with tyrant William's daughter!

Rod. I stand amazed—You surely wrong him,
There must be some mistake. [Laura.]

Lau. There can be none!
Siffredi read his full and free consent
Before the applauding senate. True indeed,
A small remain of shame, a timorous weakness,
Even dastardly in falsehood, made him blush
To act this scene in Sigismunda's eye,
Who sunk beneath his perfidy and baseness.
Hence, till to-morrow he adjourn'd the senate—
To-morrow fix'd with infamy to crown him!
Then, leading off his gay triumphant princess,
He left the poor unhappy Sigismunda,
To bend her trembling steps to that sad home
His faithless vows will render hateful to her—
He comes—Farewell—I cannot bear his presence!

SCENE VIII.

TANCRED, SIFFREDI, RODOLPHO.

Tan. (entering to Sif.) Avoid me, hoary traitor!
—Go, Rodolpho,

Give orders that all passages this way
Be shut—Defend me from a hateful world,
The bane of peace and honour—then return—

What! dost thou haunt me still? Oh, monstrous
Unparallel'd indignity! Just Heaven! [insult!
Was ever king, was ever man so treated!
So trampled into baseness!

Sif. Here, my liege,
Here strike! I nor deserve nor ask for mercy.

Tan. Distraction!—Oh, my soul—Hold, reason,
Thy giddy seat—Oh, this inhuman outrage [hold
Unhinges thought!

Sif. Exterminate thy servant!
Tan. All, all but this I could have borne—but this!
This daring insolence beyond example!
This murderous stroke that stabs my peace for ever!
That wounds me there—there! where the human
Most exquisitely feels— [heart

Sif. Oh, bear it not,
My royal lord! appease on me your vengeance!

Tan. Did ever tyrant image aught so cruel!
The lowest slave that crawls upon the earth,
Robb'd of each comfort Heaven bestows on mortals,
On the bare ground, has still his virtue left,
The sacred treasures of an honest heart,
Which thou hast dared, with rash audacious hand,
And impious fraud, in me to violate—

Sif. Behold, my liege, that rash audacious hand,
Which not repents its crime—Oh, glorious!
If by my ruin I can save your honour. [happy!

Tan. Such honour I renounce! with sovereign
Greatly detest it, and its mean adviser! [scorn
Hast thou not dared beneath my name to shelter—
My name for other purposes design'd,
Given from the fondness of a faithful heart,
With the best love o'erflowing—hast thou not
Beneath thy sovereign's name basely presumed
To shield a lie? a lie! in public utter'd,
To all deluded Sicily? But know,
This poor contrivance is as weak as base.
In such a wretched toil none can be held
But fools and cowards—Soon thy flimsy arts,
Touch'd by my just, my burning indignation,
Shall burst like threads in flame!—Thy doating
prudence

But more secures the purpose it would shake.
Had my resolves been wavering and doubtful,
This would confirm them, make them fix'd as fate;
This adds the only motive that was wanting
To urge them on through war and desolation—
What! marry her! Constantia! Her! the daughter
Of the fell tyrant who destroy'd my father!
The very thought is madness! Ere thou seest
The torch of Hymen light these hated nuptials,
Thou shalt behold Sicilia wrapt in flames,
Her cities razed, her valleys drench'd with
slaughter—

Love set aside—my pride assumes the quarrel.
My honour now is up; in spite of thee,
A world combined against me, I will give
This scatter'd will in fragments to the winds,
Assert my rights, the freedom of my heart,
Crush all who dare oppose me to the dust,
And heap perdition on thee!

Sif. Sir, 'tis just.
Exhaust on me your rage ; I claim it all.
But for these public threats thy passion utters,
'Tis what thou canst not do !

Tan. I cannot ! ha !
Driven to the dreadful brink of such dishonour,
Enough to make the tamest coward brave,
And into fierceness rouse the mildest nature,
What shall arrest my vengeance ? who ?

Sif. Thyself !
Tan. Away ! dare not to justify thy crime !
That, that alone can aggravate its horror,
Add insolence to insolence—perhaps
May make my rage forget ! —

Sif. Oh, let it burst,
On this grey head devoted to thy service !
But when the storm has vented all its fury,
Thou then must hear—nay more, I know, thou wilt—
Wilt hear the calm, yet stronger voice of reason.
Thou must reflect that a whole people's safety,
The weal of trusted millions should bear down,
Thyself the judge, thy fondest partial pleasure.
Thou must reflect that there are other duties,
A nobler pride, a more exalted honour,
Superior pleasures far, that will oblige,
Compel thee, to abide by this my deed,
Unwarranted perhaps in common justice,
But which necessity, even virtue's tyrant,
With awful voice commanded—Yes, thou must,
In calmer hours, divest thee of thy love,
These common passions of the vulgar breast,
This boiling heat of youth, and be a king !
The lover of thy people !

Tan. Truths ill employ'd !
Abused to colour guilt !—a king ! a king !
Yes, I will be a king, but not a slave !
In this will be a king ! in this my people
Shall learn to judge how I will guard their rights,
When they behold me vindicate my own.
But have I, say, been treated like a king ?—
Heavens ! could I stoop to such outrageous usage,
I were a mean, a shameless wretch, unworthy
To wield a sceptre in a land of slaves.
A soil abhorr'd of virtue should belie
My father's blood, belie those very maxims,
At other times, you taught my youth—Siffredi !

[In a softened tone of voice.]

Sif. Behold, my prince, behold thy poor old
servant,

Whose darling care, these twenty years, has been
To nurse thee up to virtue ; who for thee,
Thy glory and thy weal, renounces all,
All interest or ambition can pour forth ;
What many a selfish father would pursue
Through treachery and crimes : behold him here,
Bent on his feeble knees, to beg, conjure thee,
With tears to beg thee, to control thy passion,
And save thyself, thy honour, and thy people !
Kneeling with me behold the many thousands
To thy protection trusted : fathers, mothers,
The sacred front of venerable age,
The tender virgin and the helpless infant ;
The ministers of Heaven, those, who maintain,
Around thy throne, the majesty of rule ;
And those, whose labour, scorch'd by winds and sun,
Feeds the rejoicing public : see them all,
Here at thy feet, conjuring thee to save them,
From misery and war, from crimes and rapine !
Can there be taught, kind Heaven ! in self-indulgence
To weigh down these ? This aggregate of love,

With which compared, the dearest private passion
Is but the wafted dust upon the balance ?
Turn not away—Oh, is there not some part
In thy great heart, so sensible to kindness
And generous warmth, some nobler part, to feel
The prayers and tears of these, the mingled voice
Of Heaven and earth !

Tan. There is ! and thou hast touch'd it.
Rise, rise, Siffredi—Oh ! thou hast undone me,
Unkind old man ! O ill-entreated Tancred !
Which way soe'er I turn, dishonour rears
Her hideous front—and misery and ruin !
Was it for this you took such care to form me ?
For this imbued me with the quickest sense
Of shame ; those finer feelings, that ne'er vex
The common mass of mortals, dully happy
In blest insensibility ? Oh, rather
You should have sear'd my heart ; taught me that
power

And splendid interest lord it still o'er virtue ;
That, gilded by prosperity and pride,
There is no shame, no meanness ; temper'd thus,
It had been fit to rule a venal world.

Alas ! what meant thy wantonness of prudence ?
Why have you raised this miserable conflict
Betwixt the duties of the king and man ?
Set virtue against virtue ?—Ah, Siffredi !
'Tis thy superfluous, thy unfeeling wisdom,
That has involved me in a maze of error,
Almost beyond retreat—But hold, my soul,
Thy steady purpose—Toss'd by various passions,
To this eternal anchor keep—There is,
Can be, no public without private virtue—
Then mark me well, observe what I command ;
It is the sole expedient now remaining—
To-morrow, when the senate meets again,
Unfold the whole, unravel the deceit ;
Nor that alone, try to repair its mischief ;
There all thy power, thy eloquence and interest
Exert, to reinstate me in my rights,
And from thy own dark snares to disembroil me—
Start not, my lord—This must and shall be done !
Or here, our friendship ends—Howe'er disguised,
Whatever thy pretence, thou art a traitor.

Sif. I should indeed deserve the name of traitor,
And even a traitor's fate, had I so slightly,
From principles so weak, done what I did,
As e'er to disavow it—

Tan.

Ha !

Sif. My liege,
Expect not this—Though practised long in courts,
I have not so far learn'd their subtle trade,
To veer obedient with each gust of passion.
I honour thee, I venerate thy orders,
But honour more my duty. Nought on earth
Shall ever shake me from that solid rock,
Nor smiles nor frowns.—

Tan.

You will not then ?

Sif.

I cannot !

Tan. Away ! begone !—O my Rodolpho, come,
And save me from this traitor !—Hence, I say.—
Avoid my presence straight ! and know, old man,
Thou my worst foe beneath the mask of friendship,
Who, not content to trample in the dust
My dearest rights, dost with cool insolence
Persist, and call it duty ; hadst thou not
A daughter that protects thee, thou shouldst feel
The vengeance thou deservest—No reply !
Away !

SCENE IX.

TANCRED, RODOLPHO.

Rod. What can incense my prince so highly
Against his friend Siffredi ?

Tan. Friend ! Rodolpho ?
When I have told thee what this friend has done,
How play'd me like a boy, a base-born wretch,
Who had nor heart nor spirit ! thou wilt stand
Amazed, and wonder at my stupid patience.

Rod. I heard, with mix'd astonishment and grief,
The king's unjust dishonourable will,
Void in itself—I saw you stung with rage,
And writhing in the snare ; just as I went,
At your command, to wait you here—but that
Was the king's deed, not his.

Tan. Oh, he advised it !
These many years he has in secret hatch'd
This black contrivance, glories in the scheme,
And proudly plumes him with his traitorous virtue.
But that was nought, Rodolpho, nothing, nothing !
O that was gentle, blameless to what follow'd !
I had, my friend, to Sigismunda given,
To hush her fears, in the full gush of fondness,
A blank sign'd by my hand—and he, O Heavens !
Was ever such a wild attempt !—he wrote
Beneath my name an absolute compliance
To this detested will ; nay, dared to read it
Before myself, on my insulted throne
His idle pageant placed—Oh, words are weak
To paint the pangs, the rage, the indignation,
That whirl'd from thought to thought my soul in
tempest ;

Now on the point to burst, and now by shame
Repress'd—But in the face of Sicily,
All mad with acclamation, what, Rodolpho,
What could I do ? The sole relief that rose
To my distracted mind, was to adjourn
The assembly till to-morrow—But to-morrow
What can be done ?—Oh, it avails not what !
I care not what is done—My only care
Is how to clear my faith to Sigismunda.
She thinks me false ! She cast a look that kill'd me !
Oh, I am base in Sigismunda's eye !
The lowest of mankind, the most perfidious !

Rod. This was a strain of insolence indeed,
A daring outrage of so strange a nature,
As stuns me quite—

Tan. Cursed be my timid prudence !
That dash'd not back, that moment, in his face
The bold presumptuous lie—and cursed this hand !
That from a start of poor dissimulation,
Led off my Sigismunda's hated rival.
Ah then ! what, poison'd by the false appearance,
What, Sigismunda, were thy thoughts of me !
How, in the silent bitterness of soul,
How didst thou scorn me ! hate mankind, thyself,
For trusting to the vows of faithless Tancred !
For such I seem'd—I was !—The thought distracts
I should have cast a flattering world aside, [me !
Rush'd from my throne, before them all avow'd her,
The choice, the glory of my free-born heart,

And spurn'd the shameful fetters thrown upon it—
Instead of that—confusion !—what I did
Has clinch'd the chain, confirm'd Siffredi's crime,
And fix'd me down to infamy !

Rod. My lord,
Blame not the conduct, which your situation
Tore from your tortured heart—What could you
Had you, so circumstanced, in open senate, [do ?—
Before the astonish'd public, with no friends
Prepared, no party form'd, affronted thus
The haughty princess and her powerful faction,
Supported by this will, the sudden stroke,
Abrupt and premature, might have recoil'd
Upon yourself, even your own friends revolted,
And turn'd at once the public scale against you.
Besides, consider, had you then detected
In its fresh guilt this action of Siffredi,
You must with signal vengeance have chastised
The treasonable deed—Nothing so mean
As weak insulted power that dares not punish.
And how would that have suited with your love ?
His daughter present too ? Trust me, your conduct,
Howe'er abhorrent to a heart like yours,
Was fortunate and wise—Not that I mean
E'er to advise submission—

Tan. Heavens ! Submission !
Could I descend to bear it, even in thought,
Despise me, you, the world, and Sigismunda !
Submission !—No !—To-morrow's glorious light
Shall flash discovery on the scene of baseness.
Whatever be the risk, by heavens ! to-morrow
I will o'erturn the dirty lie-built schemes
Of these old men, and show my faithful senate,
That Manfred's son knows to assert and wear,
With undiminish'd dignity, that crown
This unexpected day has placed upon him.

But this, my friend, these stormy gusts of pride,
Are foreign to my love—Till Sigismunda
Be disabused, my breast is tumult all,
And can obey no settled course of reason.
I see her still, I feel her powerful image,
That look, where with reproach complaint was
Big with soft woe and gentle indignation, [mix'd,
Which seem'd at once to pity and to scorn me—
Oh, let me find her ! I too long have left
My Sigismunda to converse with tears,
A prey to thoughts that picture me a villain.
But, ah ! how, clogg'd with this accursed state,
A tedious world, shall I now find access ?
Her father too—Ten thousand horrors crowd
Into the wild fantastic eye of love—
Who knows what he may do ? Come then, my friend,
And, by thy sister's hand, oh let me steal
A letter to her bosom !—I no longer
Can bear her absence, by the just contempt
She now must brand me with, inflamed to madness.
Fly, my Rodolpho, fly ! engage thy sister
To aid my letter, and this very evening
Secure an interview—I would not bear
This rack another day, not for my kingdom !
Till then, deep-plunged in solitude and shades,
I will not see the hated face of man.
Thought drives on thought, on passions passions
Her smiles alone can calm my raging soul. [roll ;

ACT III.

SCENE I.

SIGISMUNDA alone, sitting in a disconsolate posture.

Ah, tyrant prince! ah, more than faithless Tancred!
 Ungenerous and inhuman in thy falsehood!
 Hadst thou, this morning, when my hopeless heart,
 Submissive to my fortune and my duty,
 Had so much spirit left, as to be willing
 To give thee back thy vows, ah! hadst thou then
 Confess'd the sad necessity thy state
 Imposed upon thee, and with gentle friendship,
 Since we must part at last, our parting soften'd;
 I should indeed—I should have been unhappy,
 But not to this extreme—Amidst my grief,
 I had, with pensive pleasure, cherish'd still
 The sweet remembrance of thy former love,
 Thy image still had dwelt upon my soul,
 And made our guiltless woes not undelightful.
 But coolly thus—How couldst thou be so cruel?
 Thus to revive my hopes, to soothe my love
 And call forth all its tenderness, then sink me
 In black despair—What unrelenting pride
 Possess'd thy breast, that thou couldst bear unmoved
 To see me bent beneath a weight of shame?
 Pangs thou canst never feel! how couldst thou
 drag me

In barbarous triumph at a rival's ear?
 How make me witness to a sight of horror?
 That hand, which, but a few short hours ago,
 So wantonly abused my simple faith,
 Before the attesting world given to another,
 Irrevocably given!—There was a time,
 When the least cloud that hung upon my brow,
 Perhaps imagined only, touch'd thy pity.
 Then, brighten'd often by the ready tear,
 Thy looks were softness all; then the quick heart,
 In every nerve alive forgot itself,
 And for each other then we felt alone.
 But now, alas! those tender days are fled;
 Now thou canst see me wretched, pierced with
 anguish,

With studied anguish of thy own creating,
 Nor wet thy harden'd eye—Hold, let me think—
 I wrong thee sure!—'Tis fickleness of nature,
 As meanly in my misery to triumph—
 What is it then?—Why should I search for pain?
 O, 'tis as bad!—'Tis fickleness of nature,
 'Tis sickly love extinguish'd by ambition—
 Is there, kind Heaven! no constancy in man?
 No steadfast truth, no generous fix'd affection,
 That can bear up against a selfish world?
 No, there is none—Even Tancred is inconstant!

[*Rising.*]

Hence! let me fly this scene!—Whate'er I see,
 These roofs, these walls, each object that surrounds
 Are tainted with his vows—But whither fly? [me,
 The groves are worse, the soft retreat of Belmont,
 Its deepening glooms, gay lawns, and airy summits,
 Will wound my busy memory to torture,
 And all its shades will whisper—faithless Tancred!—
 My father comes—How, sunk in this disorder,
 Shall I sustain his presence?

SCENE II.

SIFFREDI, SIGISMUNDA.

Sif.

Sigismunda,

My dearest child! I grieve to find thee thus
 A prey to tears. I know the powerful cause
 From which they flow, and therefore can excuse
 But not their wilful obstinate continuance. [them,
 Come, rouse thee, then, call up thy drooping spirit—
 Come, wake to reason from this dream of love,
 And show the world thou art Siffredi's daughter.

Sigis. Alas! I am unworthy of that name.

Sif. Thou art indeed to blame; thou hast too
 rashly

Engaged thy heart, without a father's sanction.
 But this I can forgive. The king has virtues,
 That plead thy full excuse; nor was I void
 Of blame, to trust thee to those dangerous virtues.
 Then dread not my reproaches. Though he blames,
 Thy tender father pities more than blames thee.
 Thou art my daughter still; and if thy heart
 Will now resume its pride, assert itself,
 And greatly rise superior to this trial,
 I to my warmest confidence again

Will take thee, and esteem thee more my daughter.

Sigis. Oh, you are gentler far than I deserve!

It is, it ever was my darling pride,
 To bend my soul to your supreme commands,
 Your wisest will; and though by love betray'd—
 Alas! and punish'd too—I have transgress'd
 The nicest bounds of duty, yet I feel
 A sentiment of tenderness, a source
 Of filial nature springing in my breast,
 That, should it kill me, shall control this passion,
 And make me all submission and obedience
 To you my honour'd lord, the best of fathers.

Sif. Come to my arms, thou comfort of my age!

Thou only joy and hope of these grey hairs!
 Come! let me take thee to a parent's heart;
 There with the kindly aid of my advice,
 Even with the dew of these paternal tears,
 Revive and nourish this becoming spirit—
 Then thou dost promise me, my Sigismunda—
 Thy father stoops to make it his request—
 Thou wilt resign thy fond presumptuous hopes,
 And henceforth never more indulge one thought
 That in the light of love regards the king?

Sigis. Hopes I have none!—Those by this fatal
 Are blasted all—But from my soul to banish, [day
 While weeping memory there retains her seat,
 Thoughts which the purest bosom might have
 cherish'd,

Once my delight, now even in anguish charming,
 Is more, alas! my lord, than I can promise.

Sif. Absence and time, the softener of our
 passions,

Will conquer this. Meantime, I hope from thee
 A generous great effort; that thou wilt now
 Exert thy utmost force, nor languish thus
 Beneath the vain extravagance of love.
 Let not thy father blush to hear it said,
 His daughter was so weak, e'er to admit

A thought so void of reason, that a king
Should to his rank, his honour, and his glory,
The high important duties of a throne,
Even to his throne itself, madly prefer
A wild romantic passion, the fond child
Of youthful dreaming thought and vacant hours;
That he should quit his heaven-appointed station,
Desert his awful charge, the care of all
The toiling millions which this isle contains;
Nay more, should plunge them into war and ruin:
And all to soothe a sick imagination,
A miserable weakness—Must for thee,
To make thee blest, Sicilia be unhappy?
The king himself, lost to the nobler sense
Of manly praise, become the piteous hero
Of some soft tale, and rush on sure destruction?
Canst thou, my daughter, let the monstrous thought
Possess one moment thy perverted fancy?
Rouse thee, for shame! and if a spark of virtue
Lies slumbering in thy soul, bid it blaze forth;
Nor sink unequal to the glorious lesson,
This day thy lover gave thee from his throne.

Sigis. Ah! that was not from virtue!—Had,
my father,
That been his aim, I yield to what you say;
'Tis powerful truth, unanswerable reason.
Then, then, with sad but duteous resignation,
I had submitted as became your daughter;
But in that moment, when my humbled hopes
Were to my duty reconciled, to raise them
To yet a fonder height than e'er they knew,
Then rudely dash them down—There is the sting!
The blasting view is ever present to me—
Why did you drag me to a sight so cruel?

Sif. It was a scene to fire thy emulation.

Sigis. It was a scene of perfidy!—But know
I will do more than imitate the king—
For he is false!—I, though sincerely pierced
With the best, truest passion, ever touch'd
A virgin's breast, here vow to Heaven and you,
Though from my heart I cannot, from my hopes
To cast this prince—What would you more, my
father?

Sif. Yes, one thing more—thy father then is
happy—

Though by the voice of innocence and virtue
Absolved, we live not to ourselves alone:
A rigorous world, with peremptory sway,
Subjects us all, and even the noblest most.
This world from thee, my honour and thy own,
Demands one step; a step, by which convinced
The king may see thy heart disdains to wear
A chain which his has greatly thrown aside.
'Tis fitting too, thy sex's pride commands thee,
To show the approving world thou canst resign,
As well as he, nor with inferior spirit,
A passion fatal to the public weal.
But above all, thou must root out for ever
From the king's breast the least remain of hope,
And henceforth make his mention'd love dishonour.
These things, my daughter, that must needs be
done,

Can but this way be done—by the safe refuge,
The sacred shelter of a husband's arms.
And there is one—

Sigis. Good Heavens! what means my lord?

Sif. One of illustrious family, high rank,
Yet still of higher dignity and merit,
Who can and will protect thee; one to awe
The king himself—Nay, hear me, Sigismunda—

The noble Osmond courts thee for his bride,
And has my plighted word—This day—

Sigis. (kneeling.) My father!

Let me with trembling arms embrace thy knees!
Oh, if you ever wish to see me happy;
If e'er in infant years I gave you joy,
When, as I prattling twined around your neck,
You snatch'd me to your bosom, kiss'd my eyes,
And melting said you saw my mother there;
Oh, save me from that worst severity
Of fate! Oh, outrage not my breaking heart
To that degree!—I cannot! 'tis impossible!—
So soon withdraw it, give it to another—
Hear me, my dearest father! hear the voice
Of nature and humanity, that plead
As well as justice for me!—Not to chuse
Without your wise direction may be duty;
But still my choice is free—That is a right,
Which even the lowest slave can never lose.
And would you thus degrade me? make me base?
For such it were to give my worthless person
Without my heart, an injury to Osmond,
The highest can be done—Let me, my lord—
Or I shall die, shall by the sudden change
Be to distraction shock'd—Let me wear out
My hapless days in solitude and silence,
Far from the malice of a prying world!
At least—you cannot sure refuse me this—
Give me a little time—I will do all,
All I can do, to please you!—Oh, your eye
Sheds a kind beam—

Sif. My daughter! you abuse
The softness of my nature—

Sigis. Here, my father,
Till you relent, here will I grow for ever!

Sif. Rise, Sigismunda.—Though you touch my
Nothing can shake the inexorable dictates [heart,
Of honour, duty, and determined reason.
Then by the holy ties of filial love,
Resolve, I charge thee, to receive earl Osmond,
As suits the man who is thy father's choice,
And worthy of thy hand—I go to bring him—

Sigis. Spare me, my dearest father!

Sif. (aside.) I must rush
From her soft grasp, or nature will betray me!
Oh, grant us, Heaven! that fortitude of mind,
Which listens to our duty, not our passions—
Quit me, my child!

Sigis. You cannot, O my father!
You cannot leave me thus!

Sif. Come hither, Laura,
Come to thy friend. Now show thyself a friend.
Combat her weakness; dissipate her tears;
Cherish and reconcile her to her duty.

SCENE III.

SIGISMUNDA, LAURA.

Sigis. Oh, woe on woe! distress'd by love and
Oh, every way unhappy Sigismunda! [duty!

Lau. Forgive me, madam, if I blame your grief.
How can you waste your tears on one so false?
Unworthy of your tenderness? to whom
Nought but contempt is due and indignation?

Sigis. You know not half the horrors of my fate!
I might perhaps have learn'd to scorn his false-
hood;

Nay, when the first sad burst of tears was past,

I might have roused my pride and scorn'd himself—
But 'tis too much, this greatest last misfortune—
Oh, whither shall I fly? Where hide me, Laura,
From the dire scene my father now prepares?

Lau. What thus alarms you, madam?

Sigs. Can it be?

Can I—ah no!—at once give to another
My violated heart? in one wild moment?
He brings earl Osmond to receive my vows!
Oh, dreadful change! for Tancred haughty Osmond!

Lau. Now, on my soul, 'tis what an outraged heart

Like yours, should wish!—I should, by Heavens,
Most exquisite revenge! [esteem it

Sigs. Revenge on whom?

On my own heart, already but too wretched!

Lau. On him! this Tancred! who has basely sold,
For the dull form of despicable grandeur,
His faith, his love!—At once a slave and tyrant!

Sigs. Oh, rail at me, at my believing folly,
My vain ill-founded hopes, but spare him, Laura!

Lau. Who raised those hopes? who triumphs
o'er that weakness?

Pardon the word—You greatly merit him;
Better than him, with all his giddy pomp;
You raised him by your smiles when he was nothing!
Where is your woman's pride? that guardian spirit

Given us to dash the perfidy of man? [patience—
Ye Powers! I cannot bear the thought with
Yet recent from the most unsparing vows
The tongue of love e'er lavish'd; from your hopes
So vainly, idly, cruelly deluded;
Before the public thus, before your father,
By an irrevocable solemn deed,
With such inhuman scorn, to throw you from him!
To give his faithless hand yet warm from thine,
With complicated meanness, to Constantia!
And to complete his crime, when thy weak limbs
Could scarce support thee, then, of thee regardless,
To lead her off!

Sigs. That was indeed a sight

To poison love! to turn it into rage [weakness
And keen contempt!—What means this stupid
That hangs upon me? Hence unworthy tears!
Disgrace my cheek no more! No more, my heart,
For one so coolly false or meanly fickle—
Oh, it imports not which—dare to suggest
The least excuse!—Yes, traitor, I will wring
Thy pride, will turn thy triumph to confusion!
I will not pine away my days for thee,
Sighing to brooks and groves; while, with vain pity,
You in a rival's arms lament my fate—
No! let me perish! ere I tamely be
That soft, that patient, gentle Sigismunda,
Who can console her with the wretched boast,
She was for thee unhappy!—If I am,
I will be nobly so!—Sicilia's daughters
Shall wondering see in me a great example
Of one who punish'd an ill-judging heart,
Who made it bow to what it most abhor'd!
Crush'd it to misery! for having thus
So lightly listen'd to a worthless lover!

Lau. At last it mounts! the kindling pride of
virtue!

Trust me, thy marriage will embitter his—

Sigs. O may the furies light his nuptial torch!
Be it accursed as mine! for the fair peace,
The tender joys, of hymeneal love,
May jealousy awaked, and fell remorse,

Pour all their fiercest venom through his breast!—
Where the fates lead, and blind revenge, I follow!—
Let me not think.—By injured love! I vow,
Thou shalt, base prince! perfidious and inhuman!
Thou shalt behold me in another's arms!
In his thou hatest! Osmond's!

Lau.

That will grind

His heart with secret rage! Ay, that will sting
His soul to madness! set him up a terror,
A spectacle of woe to faithless lovers!—
Your cooler thought, besides, will of the change
Approve, and think it happy. Noble Osmond
From the same stock with him derives his birth,
First of Sicilian barons, prudent, brave,
Of strictest honour, and by all revered—

Sigs. Talk not of Osmond, but perfidious Tancred!
Rail at him, rail! invent new names of scorn!
Assist me, Laura; lend my rage fresh fuel;
Support my staggering purpose, which already
Begins to fail me—Ah, my vaunts how vain!
How have I lied to my own heart!—Alas!
My tears return, the mighty flood o'erwhelms me!
Ten thousand crowding images distract
My tortured thought—And is it come to this?
Our hopes? our vows? our oft-repeated wishes,
Breathed from the fervent soul, and full of heaven,
To make each other happy?—come to this!

Lau. If thy own peace and honour cannot keep
Thy resolution fix'd, yet, Sigismunda,
O think, how deeply, how beyond retreat,
Thy father is engaged.

Sigs.

Ah wretched weakness!

That thus enthrals my soul, that chases thence
Each nobler thought, the sense of every duty!—
And have I then no tears for thee, my father?
Can I forget thy cares, from helpless years,
Thy tenderness for me? an eye still beam'd
With love? a brow that never knew a frown?
Nor a harsh word thy tongue? Shall I for these
Repay thy stooping venerable age,
With shame, disquiet, anguish, and dishonour?
It must not be!—Thou first of angels! come,
Sweet filial piety! and firm my breast;
Yes, let one daughter to her fate submit,
Be nobly wretched—but her father happy!—
Laura!—they come!—O Heavens! I cannot stand
The horrid trial!—Open, open, earth!
And hide me from their view!

Lau.

Madam!

SCENE IV.

SIFFREDI, OSMOND, SIGISMUNDA, LAURA.

Sif. My daughter,
Behold my noble friend who courts thy hand,
And whom to call my son I shall be proud;
Nor shall I less be pleased in his alliance,
To see thee happy.

Osm.

Think not, I presume,
Madam, on this your father's kind consent,
To make me blest. I love you from a heart,
That seeks your good superior to my own;
And will, by every art of tender friendship,
Consult your dearest welfare. May I hope,
Yours does not disavow your father's choice?

Sigs. I am a daughter, Sir—and have no power
O'er my own heart—I die—Support me, Laura.

[Faints.

Sif. Help—Bear her off—She breathes—my daughter!—

Sigis. Oh!—

Forgive my weakness—soft—my Laura, lead me—To my apartment.

Sif. Pardon me, my lord,
If by this sudden accident alarm'd,
I leave you for a moment.

SCENE V.

Osm. (alone.) Let me think—

What can this mean?—Is it to me aversion?

Or is it, as I fear'd, she loves another?

Ha!—yes—perhaps the king, the young count Tancred!

They were bred up together—Surely that,

That cannot be—Has he not given his hand,

In the most solemn manner, to Constantia?

Does not his crown depend upon the deed?

No—if they loved, and this old statesman knew it,
He could not to a king prefer a subject.

His virtues I esteem—nay more, I trust them—

So far as virtue goes—but could he place

His daughter on the throne of Sicily—

Oh, 'tis a glorious bribe, too much for man!—

What is it then?—I care not what it be.

My honour now, my dignity demands,

That my proposed alliance, by her father,

And even herself accepted, be not scorn'd.

I love her too—I never knew till now

To what a pitch I loved her. Oh, she shot

Ten thousand charms into my inmost soul!

She look'd so mild, so amiably gentle,

She bow'd her head, she glow'd with such confusion,

Such loveliness of modesty! She is,

In gracious mind, in manners, and in person,

The perfect model of all female beauty!—

She must be mine—She is!—If yet her heart

Consents not to my happiness, her duty,

Join'd to my tender cares, will gain so much

Upon her generous nature—That will follow.

The man of sense, who acts a prudent part,
Not flattering steals, but forms himself the heart.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

The garden belonging to SIFFREDI'S house.

SIGISMUNDA, LAURA.

Sigis. (with a letter in her hand.) 'Tis done!—I am a slave!—The fatal vow

Has pass'd my lips!—Methought in those sad moments,

The tombs around, the saints, the darken'd altar,
And all the trembling shrines, with horror shook.

But here is still new matter of distress.

O Tancred, cease to persecute me more!

Oh, grudge me not some calmer state of woe!

Some quiet gloom to shade my hopeless days,

Where I may never hear of love and thee!—

Has Laura too conspired against my peace?

Why did you take this letter?—bear it back—

[Giving her the letter.]

I will not court new pain.

Lau.

Madam, Rodolpho

Urged me so much, nay, even with tears conjured me,

But this once more to serve the unhappy king—

For such he said he was—that though enraged,

Equal with thee, at his inhuman falsehood,

I could not to my brother's fervent prayers

Refuse this office—Read it—His excuses

Will only more expose his falsehood.

Sigis.

No.

It suits not Osmond's wife to read one line

From that contagious hand—she knows too well!

Lau. He paints him out distress'd beyond expression,

Even on the point of madness. Wild as winds,

And fighting seas, he raves. His passions mix,

With ceaseless rage, all in each giddy moment.

He dies to see you and to clear his faith.

Sigis. Save me from that!—That would be worse than all!

Lau. I but report my brother's words; who then
Began to talk of some dark imposition,

That had deceived us all; when, interrupted,
We heard your father and earl Osmond near,
As summon'd to Constantia's court they went.

Sigis. Ha! imposition!—Well! If I am doom'd

To be, o'er all my sex, the wretch of love,

In vain I would resist—Give me the letter—

To know the worst is some relief—Alas!

It was not thus, with such dire palpitations,

That, Tancred, once I used to read thy letters.

[Attempting to read the letter, but gives it to LAURA.]

Ah, fond remembrance blinds me!—Read it, Laura.

LAURA reads.

"Deliver me, Sigismunda, from that most exquisite misery which a faithful heart can suffer—To be thought base by her, from whose esteem even virtue borrows new charms. When I submitted to my cruel situation, it was not falsehood you beheld, but an excess of love. Rather than endanger that, I for a while gave up my honour. Every moment till I see you stabs me with severer pangs than real guilt itself can feel. Let me then conjure you to meet me in the garden, towards the close of the day, when I will explain this mystery. We have been most inhumanly abused; and that by the means of the very paper which I gave you, from the warmest sincerity of love, to assure to you the heart and hand of

"TANCRED."

Sigis. There, Laura, there, the dreadful secret
That paper! ah that paper! it suggests [sprung!]

A thousand horrid thoughts—I to my father

Gave it; and he perhaps—I dare not cast

A look that way—If yet indeed you love me,

Oh, blast me not, kind Tancred, with the truth!

Oh, pitying keep me ignorant for ever!

What strange peculiar misery is mine?

Reduced to wish the man I love were false?

Why was I hurried to a step so rash?

Repairless woe!—I might have waited, sure,

A few short hours—No duty that forbade—
I owed thy love that justice ; till this day
Thy love an image of all-perfect goodness !
A beam from Heaven that glow'd with every virtue !
And have I thrown this prize of life away ?
The piteous wreck of one distracted moment ?
Ah the cold prudence of remorseless age !
Ah parents, traitors to your children's bliss !
Ah cursed, ah blind revenge !—On every hand
I was betray'd—You, Laura, too, betray'd me !

Lau. Who, who, but he, whate'er he writes,
betray'd you ?
Or false or pusillanimous. For once,
I will with you suppose, that his agreement
To the king's will was forged—Though forged by
whom ?

Your father scorns the crime—Yet what avails it ?
This, if it clears his truth, condemns his spirit.
A youthful king, by love and honour fired,
Patient to sit on his insulted throne,
And let an outrage, of so high a nature,
Unpunish'd pass, uncheck'd, uncontradicted—
Oh, 'tis a meanness equal even to falsehood.

Sigis. Laura, no more—We have already judged
Too largely without knowledge. Oft, what seems
A trifle, a mere nothing, by itself,
In some nice situations turns the scale
Of fate, and rules the most important actions.
Yes, I begin to feel a sad presage :
I am undone, from that eternal source
Of human woes—the judgment of the passions.
But what have I to do with these excuses ?
O cease my treacherous heart to give them room !
It suits not thee to plead a lover's cause ;
Even to lament my fate is now dishonour.
Nought now remains, but with relentless purpose,
To shun all interviews, all clearing up
Of this dark scene ; to wrap myself in gloom,
In solitude and shades ; there to devour
The silent sorrows ever swelling here ;
And since I must be wretched—for I must—
To claim the mighty misery myself,
Engross it all, and spare a hapless father.
Hence, let me fly !—the hour approaches—

Lau. Madam,
Behold he comes—the king—
Sigis. Heavens ! how escape ?
No—I will stay—This one last meeting—Leave me.

SCENE II.

TANCRED, SIGISMUNDA.

Tan. And are these long, long hours of torture
My life ! my Sigismunda ! [past ?

[*Throwing himself at her feet.*
Rise, my lord.

To see my sovereign thus no more becomes me.
Tan. Oh, let me kiss the ground on which you tread !
Let me exhale my soul in softest transport !
Since I again embrace my Sigismunda ! [*Rising.*

Unkind ! how couldst thou ever deem me false ?
How thus dishonour love ?—Oh, I could much
Embitter my complaint !—How low were then
Thy thoughts of me ? How didst thou then affront
The human heart itself ? After the vows,
The fervent truth, the tender protestations,
Which mine has often pour'd, to let thy breast,
Whate'er the appearance was, admit suspicion ?

Sigis. How ! when I heard myself your full con-
To the late king's so just and prudent will ? [sent
Heard it before you read, in solemn senate ?
When I beheld you give your royal hand
To her, whose birth and dignity of right
Demands that high alliance ? Yes, my lord,
You have done well. The man whom Heaven
appoints

To govern others, should himself first learn
To bend his passions to the sway of reason.
In all you have done well ; but when you bid
My humbled hopes look up to you again,
And soothed with wanton cruelty my weakness—
That too was well—My vanity deserved
The sharp rebuke, whose fond extravagance
Could ever dream to balance your repose,
Your glory and the welfare of a people. [now,

Tan. Chide on, chide on. Thy soft reproaches
Instead of wounding, only soothe my fondness.
No, no, thou charming consort of my soul !
I never loved thee with such faithful ardour,
As in that cruel miserable moment [stoop'd
You thought me false ; when even my honour
To wear for thee a baffled face of baseness.
It was thy barbarous father, Sigismunda,
Who caught me in the toil. He turn'd that paper,
Meant for the assuring bond of nuptial love,
To ruin it for ever ; he, he wrote
That forged consent, you heard, beneath my name—
Nay, dared before my outraged throne to read it !
Had he not been thy father—Ha ! my love !
You tremble, you grow pale.

Sigis. Oh, leave me, Tancred !

Tan. No !—Leave thee ?—Never ! never ! till
you set

My heart at peace, till these dear lips again
Pronounce thee mine ! Without thee I renounce
Myself, my friends, the world—Here on this hand—

Sigis. My lord, forget that hand, which never
Can be to thine united— [now

Tan. Sigismunda !
What dost thou mean ?—Thy words, thy look, thy
manner,
Seem to conceal some horrid secret—Heavens !—
No—That was wild—Distraction fires the
thought !—

Sigis. Inquire no more—I never can be thine.

Tan. What, who shall interpose ? who dares
To brave the fury of an injured king ? [attempt
Who, ere he sees thee ravish'd from his hopes,
Will wrap all blazing Sicily in flames—

Sigis. In vain your power, my lord—This fatal
Join'd to my father's unrelenting will, [error,
Has placed an everlasting bar betwixt us—
I am—earl Osmond's—wife.

Tan. Earl Osmond's wife !—

[*After a long pause, during which they look at one
another with the highest agitation and most
tender distress.*

Heavens ! did I hear thee right ! what ! married ?
married !

Lost to thy faithful Tancred ! lost for ever !
Couldst thou then doom me to such matchless woe,
Without so much as hearing me ?—Distraction !—
Alas ! what hast thou done ? Ah Sigismunda !
Thy rash credulity has done a deed,
Which of two happiest lovers—that e'er felt
The blissful power, has made two finish'd wretches !
But—Madness !—Sure, thou know'st it cannot be !
This hand is mine ! a thousand thousand vows—

SCENE III.

TANCRED, OSMOND, SIGISMUNDA.

Osm. [Snatching her hand from the king—
Madam, this hand, by the most solemn
A little hour ago, was given to me, [rites,
And did not sovereign honour now command me,
Never but with my life to quit my claim,
I would renounce it—thus !

Tan. Ha ! who art thou ?
Presumptuous man !

Sigis. (aside.) Where is my father ? Heavens !
[Goes out.

Osm. One thou shouldst better know—Yes—
view me—one !

Who can and will maintain his rights and honour,
Against a faithless prince, an upstart king,
Whose first base deed is what a harden'd tyrant
Would blush to act.

Tan. Insolent Osmond ! know,
This upstart king will hurl confusion on thee,
And all who shall invade his sacred rights,
Prior to thine—thine founded on compulsion,
On infamous deceit, while his proceed
From mutual love and free long-plighted faith.
She is, and shall be mine !—I will annul,
By the high power with which the laws invest me,
Those guilty forms in which you have entrapp'd,
Basely entrapp'd, to thy detested nuptials,
My queen betroth'd ! who has my heart, my hand,
And shall partake my throne—If, haughty lord,
If this thou didst not know, then know it now !
And know besides, as I have told thee this,
Shouldst thou but think to urge thy treason further—
Than treason more ! Treason against my love !—
Thy life shall answer for it !

Osm. Ha ! my life !—
It moves my scorn to hear thy empty threats.
When was it that a Norman baron's life
Became so vile, as on the frown of kings
To hang ?—Of that, my lord, the law must judge :
Or if the law be weak, my guardian sword—

Tan. Dare not to touch it, traitor ! lest my rage
Break loose, and do a deed that misbecomes me.

SCENE IV.

TANCRED, SIFFREDI, OSMOND.

Sif. (entering.) My gracious lord ! what is it
I behold !

My sovereign in contention with his subjects ?
Surely this house deserves from royal Tancred
A little more regard, than to be made
A scene of trouble and unseemly jars.
It grieves my soul, it baffles every hope,
It makes me sick of life, to see thy glory
Thus blasted in the bud.—Heavens ! can your
From your exalted character descend, [highness
The dignity of virtue ; and, instead
Of being the protector of our rights,
The holy guardian of domestic bliss,
Unkindly thus disturb the sweet repose,
The secret peace of families, for which
Alone the freeborn race of man to laws
And government submitted ?

Tan. My lord Siffredi,
Spare thy rebuke. The duties of my station

Are not to me unknown.—But thou, old man,
Dost thou not blush to talk of rights invaded ?
And of our best, our dearest bliss disturb'd ?
Thou ! who with more than barbarous perfidy
Hast trampled all allegiance, justice, truth,
Humanity itself, beneath thy feet ?
Thou know'st thou hast—I could, to thy confusion,
Return thy hard reproaches ; but I spare thee
Before this lord, for whose ill-sorted friendship
Thou hast most basely sacrificed thy daughter.
Farewell, my lord !—For thee, lord constable,
Who dost presume to lift thy surly eye
To my soft love, my gentle Sigismunda,
I once again command thee, on thy life,——
Yes—chew thy rage—but mark me—on thy life,
No further urge thy arrogant pretensions !

SCENE V.

SIFFREDI, OSMOND.

Osm. Ha ! arrogant pretensions ! heaven and
What ! arrogant pretensions to my wife ! [earth !
My wedded wife ! Where are we ? In a land
Of civil rule, of liberty and laws ?——
Not on my life pursue them ?—Giddy prince !
My life disdains thy nod. It is the gift
Of parent heaven, who gave me too an arm,
A spirit to defend it against tyrants.
The Norman race, the sons of mighty Rollo,
Who rushing in a tempest from the north,
Great nurse of generous freemen ! bravely won
With their own swords their seats, and still possess
By the same noble tenure, are not used [them
To hear such language—If I now desist,
Then brand me for a coward ! deem me villain !
A traitor to the public ! By this conduct
Deceived, betray'd, insulted, tyrannised.
Mine is a common cause. My arm shall guard,
Mix'd with my own, the rights of each Sicilian,
Of social life, and of mankind in general.
Ere to thy tyrant rage they fall a prey,
I shall find means to shake thy tottering throne,
Which this illegal, this perfidious usage
Forfeits at once, and crush thee in the ruins !
Constantia is my queen !

Sif. Lord constable,
Let us be stedfast in the right ; but let us
Act with cool prudence, and with manly temper,
As well as manly firmness. True, I own,
The indignities you suffer are so high,
As might even justify what now you threaten.
But if, my lord, we can prevent the woes,
The cruel horrors of intestine war,
Yet hold untouched our liberties and laws ;
Oh, let us, raised above the turbid sphere
Of little selfish passions, nobly do it !
Nor to our hot intemperate pride pour out
A dire libation of Sicilian blood.
'Tis god-like magnanimity, to keep,
When most provoked, our reason calm and clear,
And execute her will, from a strong sense
Of what is right, without the vulgar aid
Of heat and passion, which, though honest, bear us
Often too far. Remember that my house
Protects my daughter still ; and ere I saw her
Thus ravish'd from us, by the arm of power,
This hand should act the Roman father's part.
Fear not ; be temperate ; all will yet be well.

I know the king. At first his passions burst Quick as the lightning's flash ; but in his breast Honour and justice dwell—Trust me, to reason He will return.

Osm. He will !—By Heavens, he shall !—
You know the king—I wish, my lord Siffredi,
That you had deign'd to tell me all you knew—
And would you have me wait with duteous patience,
Till he return to reason ? Ye just Powers !
When he has planted on our necks his foot,
And trod us into slaves ; when his vain pride
Is cloy'd with our submission ; if, at last,
He finds his arm too weak to shake the frame
Of wide-establish'd order out of joint,
And overturn all justice ; then, perchance,
He, in a fit of sickly kind repentance,
May make a merit to return to reason.
No, no, my lord !—There is a nobler way,
To teach the blind oppressive *fury* reason :
Oft has the lustre of avenging steel
Unseal'd her stupid eyes—The sword is reason !

SCENE VI.

SIFFREDI, OSMOND, RODOLPHO, *with Guards.*

Rod. My lord high constable of Sicily,
In the king's name, and by his special order,
I here arrest you prisoner of state.

Osm. What king ? I know no king of Sicily,
Unless he be the husband of Constantia.

Rod. Then know him now—Behold his royal
To bear you to the castle of Palermo. [*orders*

Sif. Let the big torrent foam its madness off.
Submit, my lord—No castle long can hold
Our wrongs—This, more than friendship or alli-
ance,

Confirms me thine ; this binds me to thy fortunes,
By the strong tie of common injury,
Which nothing can dissolve—I grieve, Rodolpho,
To see the reign in such unhappy sort
Begin.

Osm. The reign ! the usurpation call it !
This meteor king may blaze awhile, but soon
Must spend his idle terrors—Sir, lead on—
Farewell, my lord—More than my life and for-
tune,

Remains well, is in your hands—my honour !

Sif. Our honour is the same. My son, farewell—
We shall not long be parted. On these eyes
Sleep shall not shed his balm, till I behold thee
Restored to freedom, or partake thy bonds.

Even noble courage is not void of blame,
Till nobler patience sanctifies its flame.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Sif. (alone.) THE prospect lowers around. I
found the king,
Though calm'd a little, with subsiding tempest,
As suits his generous nature, yet in love
Abated nought, most ardent in his purpose ;
Inexorably fix'd, whate'er the risk,
To claim my daughter, and dissolve this marriage—
I have embark'd, upon a perilous sea,
A mighty treasure. Here the rapid youth,
The impetuous passions of a lover-king
Check my bold course ; and there, the jealous pride,
The impatient honour of a haughty lord
Of the first rank, in interest and dependants
Near equal to the king, forbid retreat.
My honour too, the same unchanged conviction,
That these my measures were, and still remain
Of absolute necessity, to save
The land from civil fury, urge me on.
But how proceed ? I only faster rush
Upon the desperate evils I would shun.
Whate'er the motive be, deceit, I fear,
And harsh unnatural force are not the means
Of public welfare or of private bliss—
Bear witness, Heaven ! Thou mind-inspecting eye !
My breast is pure. I have preferr'd my duty,
The good and safety of my fellow-subjects,
To all those views that fire the selfish race
Of men, and mix them in eternal broils.

Enter an Officer belonging to SIFFREDI.

Off. My lord, a man of noble port, his face
Wrapp'd in disguise, is earnest for admission.

Sif. Go bid him enter— [*Officer goes out.*
Ha ! wrapp'd in disguise !

And at this late unseasonable hour !
When o'er the world tremendous midnight reigns,
By the dire gloom of raging tempest doubled—

SCENE II.

SIFFREDI, OSMOND, *discovering himself.*

Sif. What ! ha ! earl Osmond, you ?—Welcome,
once more,

To this glad roof !—But why in this disguise ?
Would I could hope the king exceeds his promise !
I have his faith, soon as to-morrow's sun
Shall gild Sicilia's cliffs, you shall be free.

Has some good angel turn'd his heart to justice ?

Osm. It is not by the favour of count Tancred
That I am here. As much I scorn his favour,
As I defy his tyranny and threats—
Our friend Goffredo, who commands the castle,
On my parole, ere dawn, to render back
My person, has permitted me this freedom.
Know then ; the faithless outrage of to-day,
By him committed whom you call the king,
Has roused Constantia's court. Our friends, the
Of virtue, justice, and of public faith, [*friends*
Ripe for revolt, are in high ferment all.
This, this, they say, exceeds whate'er deform'd
The miserable days we saw beneath
William the Bad. This saps the solid base,
At once of government and private life ;
This shameless imposition on the faith,
The majesty of senates, this lewd insult,

This violation of the rights of men.

Added to these, his ignominious treatment
Of her, the illustrious offspring of our kings,
Sicilia's hope, and now our royal mistress.
You know, my lord, how grossly these infringe
The late king's will: which orders, if count Tancred
Make not Constantia partner of his throne,
That he be quite excluded the succession,
And she to Henry given, king of the Romans,
The potent emperor Barbarossa's son,
Who seeks with earnest instance her alliance.
I thence of you, as guardian of the laws,
As guardian of this will to you entrusted,
Desire—nay, more, demand your instant aid,
To see it put in vigorous execution.

Sif. You cannot doubt, my lord, of my concurrence.

Who more than I have labour'd this great point?
'Tis my own plan. And if I drop it now,
I should be justly branded with the shame
Of rash advice, or despicable weakness.
But let us not precipitate the matter:
Constantia's friends are numerous and strong;
Yet Tancred's, trust me, are of equal force.
E'er since the secret of his birth was known,
The people all are in a tumult hurl'd
Of boundless joy, to hear there lives a prince
Of mighty Guiscard's line. Numbers, besides,
Of powerful barons, who at heart had pined,
To see the reign of their renown'd forefathers,
Won by immortal deeds of matchless valour,
Pass from the gallant Normans to the Suevi,
Will with a kind of rage espouse his cause—
'Tis so, my lord—be not by passion blinded—
'Tis surely so—Oh, if our prating virtue
Dwells not in words alone—Oh, let us join,
My generous Osmond, to avert these woes,
And yet sustain our tottering Norman kingdom!

Osm. But how, Siffredi? how?—If by soft means

We can maintain our rights, and save our country,
May his unnatural blood first stain the sword,
Who with un pitying fury first shall draw it!

Sif. I have a thought—The glorious work be
But it requires an awful flight of virtue, [thine.
Above the passions of the vulgar breast;
And thence from thee I hope it, noble Osmond—
Suppose my daughter, to her God devoted,
Were placed within some convent's sacred verge,
Beneath the dread protection of the altar—

Osm. Ere then, by Heavens! I would devoutly shave

My holy scalp, turn whining monk myself,
And pray incessant for the tyrant's safety!
What! How! because an insolent invader,
A sacrilegious tyrant, in contempt
Of all those noblest rights, which to maintain
Is man's peculiar pride, demands my wife;
That I shall thus betray the common cause
Of human kind, and tamely yield her up,
Even in the manner you propose—Oh, then
I were supremely vile! degraded! shamed!
The scorn of manhood! and abhorr'd of honour!

Sif. There is, my lord, an honour, the calm child
Of reason, of humanity and mercy,
Superior far to this punctilious demon,
That singly minds itself, and oft embroils
With proud barbarian niceties the world!

Osm. My lord, my lord!—I cannot brook your prudence—

It holds a pulse unequal to my blood—
Unblemish'd honour is the flower of virtue!
The vivifying soul! and he who slights it
Will leave the other dull and lifeless dross.

Sif. No more—You are too warm.

Osm.

You are too cool.

Sif. Too cool, my lord! I were indeed too cool,
Not to resent this language, and to tell thee
I wish earl Osmond were as cool as I
To his own selfish bliss—ay, and as warm
To that of others—But of this no more—
My daughter is thy wife—I gave her to thee,
And will against all force maintain her thine.
But think not I will catch thy headlong passions,
Whirl'd in a blaze of madness o'er the land;
Or till the last extremity compel me,
Risk the dire means of war. The king to-morrow
Will set you free; and if by gentle means
He does not yield my daughter to your arms,
And wed Constantia, as the will requires,
Why then expect me on the side of justice—
Let that suffice.

Osm.

It does—forgive my heat.

My rankled mind, by injuries inflamed,
May be too prompt to take and give offence.

Sif. 'Tis past—Your wrongs, I own, may well transport

The wisest mind—But henceforth, noble Osmond,
Do me more justice, honour more my truth,
Nor mark me with an eye of sly suspicion—
These jars apart—You may repose your soul
On my firm faith and unremitting friendship.
Of that I sure have given exalted proof,
And the next sun we see, shall prove it further—
Return, my son, and from your friend Goffredo
Release your word. There try, by soft repose,
To calm your breast.

Osm.

Bid the vex'd ocean sleep,

Swept by the pinions of the raging north—
But your frail age, by care and toil exhausted,
Demands the balm of all-repairing rest.

Sif. Soon as to-morrow's dawn shall streak the skies,

I, with my friends in solemn state assembled,
Will to the palace, and demand your freedom.
Then by calm reason, or by higher means,
The king shall quit his claim, and in the face
Of Sicily, my daughter shall be yours.
Farewell.

Osm. My lord, good night.

SCENE III.

Osm. (alone; after a long pause.) I like him not—
Yes—I have mighty matter of suspicion.
'Tis plain—I see it lurking in his breast,
He has a foolish fondness for this king—
My honour is not safe, while here my wife
Remains—Who knows but he this very night
May bear her to some convent as he mention'd—
The king too—though I smother'd up my rage,
I mark'd it well—will set me free to-morrow.
Why not to-night? He has some dark design—
By heavens! he has—I am abused most grossly;
Made the vile tool of this old statesman's schemes;
Married to one—Ay, and he knew it—one
Who loves young Tancred! Hence her swooning,
tears,

And all her soft distress, when she disgraced me
By basely giving her perfidious hand
Without her heart—Hell and perdition ! this,
This is the perfidy ! This is the fell,
The keen, evenom'd, exquisite disgrace !
Which to a man of honour even exceeds
The falsehood of the person—But I now
Will rouse me from the poor tame lethargy,
By my believing fondness cast upon me.
I will not wait his crawling timid motions,
Perhaps to blind me meant, which he to-morrow
Has promised to pursue. No ! ere his eyes
Shall open on to-morrow's orient beam,
I will convince him that earl Osmond never
Was form'd to be his dupe—I know full well
The important weight and danger of the deed :
But to a man, whom greater dangers press,
Driven to the brink of infamy and horror,
Rashness itself, and utter desperation,
Are the best prudence—I will bear her off
This night, and lodge her in a place of safety.
I have a trusty band that waits not far.
Hence ! let me lose no time—One rapid moment
Should ardent form, at once, and execute
A bold design—'Tis fix'd—'Tis done !—Yes, then,
When I have seized the prize of love and honour,
And with a friend secured her ; to the castle
I will repair, and claim Goffredo's promise
To rise with all his garrison—my friends
With brave impatience wait. The mine is laid,
And only wants my kindling touch to spring.

SCENE IV.

SIGISMUNDA'S Apartment.

SIGISMUNDA, LAURA.

Lau. Heavens ! 'tis a fearful night !
Sigis. Ah ! the black rage
Of midnight tempest, or the assuring smiles
Of radiant morn are equal all to me.
Nought now has charms or terrors to my breast,
The seat of stupid woe !—Leave me, my Laura.
Kind rest, perhaps, may hush my woes a little—
O for that quiet sleep that knows no morning !
Lau. Madam, indeed I know not how to go.
Indulge my fondness—Let me watch a while
By your sad bed, till these dread hours shall pass.
Sigis. Alas ! what is the toil of elements,
This idle perturbation of the sky,
To what I feel within !—O that the fires
Of pitying Heaven would point their fury here !
Good night, my dearest Laura !
Lau. Oh, I know not
What this oppression means—But 'tis with pain,
With tears, I can persuade myself to leave you—
Well then—Good night, my dearest Sigismunda !

SCENE V.

Sigis. And am I then alone ?—The most undone,
Most wretched being now beneath the cope
Of this affrighting gloom that wraps the world !—
I said I did not fear—Ah me ! I feel
A shivering horror run through all my powers !
Oh, I am nought but tumult, fears, and weakness !
And yet how idle fear when hope is gone,

Gone, gone for ever !—O thou gentle scene

[Looking towards her bed.]

Of sweet repose, where by the oblivious draught
Of each sad toilsome day, to peace restored
Unhappy mortals lose their woes awhile,
Thou hast no peace for me !—What shall I do ?
How pass this dreadful night, so big with terror ?—
Here with the midnight shades, here will I sit,
[Sitting down.]

A prey to dire despair, and ceaseless weep
The hours away—Bless me—I heard a noise—
[Starting up.]

No—I mistook—Nothing but silence reigns
And awful midnight round—Again ! O heavens !
My lord the king !

SCENE VI.

TANCRED, SIGISMUNDA.

Tan. Be not alarm'd, my love !
Sigis. Myroyall lord ! why at this midnight hour ?
How came you hither ?

Tan. By that secret way
My love contrived, when we, in happier days,
Used to devote these hours, so much in vain,
To vows of love and everlasting friendship.

Sigis. Why will you thus persist to add new stings
To her distress, who never can be thine ?
Oh, fly me ! fly ! You know—

Tan. I know too much.
Oh, how I could reproach thee, Sigismunda !
Pour out my injured soul in just complaints !
But now the time permits not, these swift moments—
I told thee how thy father's artifice
Forced me to seem perfidious in thy eyes.
Ah, fatal blindness ! not to have observed
The mingled pangs of rage and love that shook me :
When, by my cruel public situation
Compell'd, I only feign'd consent, to gain
A little time, and more secure thee mine.
E'er since—a dreadful interval of care !
My thoughts have been employ'd, not without hope,
How to defeat Siffredi's barbarous purpose.
But thy credulity has ruin'd all,—
Thy rash, thy wild—I know not what to name it—
Oh, it has proved the giddy hopes of man
To be delusion all, and sickening folly !

Sigis. Ah, generous Tancred ! ah, thy truth
destroys me ;
Yes, yes, 'tis I, 'tis I alone am false !
My hasty rage, join'd to my tame submission,
More than the most exalted filial duty
Could e'er demand, has dash'd our cup of fate
With bitterness unequal'd—But, alas !
What are thy woes to mine ?—to mine !—just
Heaven !—

Now is thy turn of vengeance—hate, renounce me !
Oh, leave me to the fate I well deserve,
To sink in hopeless misery !—at least,
Try to forget the worthless Sigismunda !

Tan. Forget thee ! No ! Thou art my soul itself !
I have no thought, no hope, no wish but thee !
Even this repented injury, the fears,
That rouse me all to madness, at the thought
Of losing thee, the whole collected pains
Of my full heart, serve but to make thee dearer !
Ah, how forget thee !—Much must be forgot,
Ere Tancred can forget his Sigismunda ! *[Effort.]*

Sigis. But you, my lord, must make that great

Tan. Can Sigismunda make it ?

Sigis. Ah ! I know not
With what success—But all that feeble woman
And love-entangled reason can perform,
I, to the utmost, will exert to do it.

Tan. Fear not—'tis done !—If thou canst form
the thought,

Success is sure—I am forgot already ! [more.]

Sigis. Ah, Tancred ?—But, my lord, respect me
Think who I am—What can you now propose ?

Tan. To claim the plighted vows which Heaven
has heard,

To vindicate the rights of holy love
By faith and honour bound, to which compared
These empty forms, which have ensnared thy hand,
Are impious guile, abuse, and profanation—
Nay, as a king, whose high prerogative
By this unlicensed marriage is affronted,
To bid the laws themselves pronounce it void.

Sigis. Honour, my lord, is much too proud to catch
At every slender twig of nice distinctions.

These for the unfeeling vulgar may do well :

But those, whose souls are by the nicer rule

Of virtuous delicacy nobly sway'd,

Stand at another bar than that of laws.

Then cease to urge me—Since I am not born

To that exalted fate to be your queen—

Or, yet a dearer name—to be your wife !

I am the wife of an illustrious lord

Of your own princely blood ; and what I am,

I will with proper dignity remain.

Retire, my royal lord—There is no means

To cure the wounds this fatal day has given.

We meet no more !

Tan. O barbarous Sigismunda !

And canst thou talk thus steadily ? thus treat me

With such un pitying, unrelenting rigour ?

Poor is the love, that rather than give up

A little pride, a little formal pride,

The breath of vanity ! can bear to see

The man, whose heart was once so dear to thine,

By many a tender vow so mix'd together,

A prey to anguish, fury and distraction !—

Thou canst not surely make me such a wretch,

Thou canst not, Sigismunda !—Yet relent,

O save us yet !—Rodolpho, with my guards,

Waits in the garden—Let us seize the moments

We ne'er may have again—With more than power

I will assert thee mine, with fairest honour.

The world shall even approve ; each honest bosom

Swell with a kindred joy to see us happy.

Sigis. The world approve ! What is the world
to me ?

The conscious mind is its own awful world.—

And yet, perhaps, if thou wert not a king,

I know not, Tancred, what I might have done.

Then, then, my conduct, sanctified by love,

Could not be deem'd, by the severest judge,

The mean effect of interest or ambition.

But now not all my partial heart can plead,

Shall ever shake the unalterable dictates

That tyrannise my breast.

Tan. 'Tis well—no more—

I yield me to my fate—Yes, yes, inhuman !

Since thy barbarian heart is steel'd by pride,

Shut up to love and pity, here behold me

Cast on the ground, a vile and abject wretch !

Lost to all cares, all dignities, all duties !

Here will I grow, breathe out my faithful soul,
Here at thy feet—Death, death alone shall part us !

Sigis. Have you then vow'd to drive me to per-
dition ?

What can I more ?—Yes, Tancred ! once again

I will forget the dignity my station

Commands me to sustain—for the last time

Will tell thee, that I fear, no ties, no duty,

Can ever root thee from my hapless bosom.

O leave me ! fly me ! were it but in pity !

To see what once we tenderly have loved,

Cut off from every hope—cut off for ever !

Is pain thy generosity should spare me.

Then rise, my lord ; and if you truly love me ;

If you respect my honour,—nay, my peace ;

Retire ! for though the emotions of my heart

Can ne'er alarm my virtue ; yet, alas !

They tear it so, they pierce it with such anguish—

Oh, 'tis too much !—I cannot bear the conflict !

SCENE VII.

TANCRED, OSMOND, SIGISMUNDA.

Osm. (entering.) Turn, tyrant ! turn ! and answer
to my honour,

For this thy base insufferable outrage !

Tan. Insolent traitor ! think not to escape

Thyself my vengeance ! [*They fight. OSMOND falls.*]

Sigis. Help here ! help !—O Heavens !

[*Throwing herself down by him.*]

Alas ! my lord, what meant your headlong rage ?

That faith, which I this day upon the altar,

To you devoted, is unblemish'd, pure,

As vestal truth ; was resolutely yours,

Beyond the power of aught on earth to shake it.

Osm. Perfidious woman ! die !—

[*Shortening his sword, he plunges it into her breast.*]

And to the grave

Attend a husband, yet but half avenged ?

Tan. O horror ! horror ! execrable villain !

Osm. And, tyrant ! thou !—Thou shalt not o'er
my tomb

Exult—'Tis well—'Tis great ;—I die content !—

[*Dies.*]

SCENE VIII.

TANCRED, SIFFREDI, RODOLPHO, SIGISMUNDA, LAURA.

TANCRED, (*Throwing himself down by SIGISMUNDA.*)

Quick ! here ! bring aid !—All in Palermo bring

Whose skill can save her !—Ah ! that gentle bosom

Pours fast the streams of life.

Sigis. All aid is vain,

I feel the powerful hand of death upon me—

But, oh ! it sheds a sweetness through my fate,

That I am thine again ; and without blame,

May in my Tancred's arms resign my soul !

Tan. Oh, death is in that voice ! so gently mild,

So sadly sweet, as mixes even with mine

The tears of hovering angels !—Mine again !—

And is it thus the cruel fates have join'd us ;

Are these the horrid nuptials they prepare

For love like ours ? Is virtue thus rewarded ?

Let not my impious rage accuse just Heaven !

Thou, Tancred ! Thou ! hast murder'd Sigismunda !

That furious man was but the tool of fate,

I, I the cause !—But I will do thee justice

On this deaf heart ! that to thy tender wisdom

Refused an ear—Yes, death shall soon unite us !

Sigis. Live, live, my Tancred!—Let my death suffice

To expiate all that may have been amiss.
May it appease the fates, avert their fury
From thy propitious reign! Meantime, of me
And of thy glory mindful, live, I charge thee,
To guard our friends, and make thy people happy—

[*Observing SIFFREDI fixed in astonishment and grief.*]

My father!—Oh! how shall I lift my eyes
To thee, my sinking father!

Sif. Awful Heaven!
I am chastised—My dearest child!—

Sigis. Where am I?

A fearful darkness closes all around—
My friends! We needs must part—I must obey
The imperious call—Farewell, my Laura! cherish
My poor afflicted father's age—Rodolpho,
Now is the time to watch the unhappy king,
With all the care and tenderness of friendship—
O my dear father! bow'd beneath the weight
Of age and grief—the victim even of virtue,
Receive my last adieu!—Where art thou, Tancred?

Give me thy hand—But, ah!—it cannot save me
From the dire king of terrors, whose cold power
Creeps o'er my heart—Oh!

Tan. How these pangs distract me!
Oh, lift thy gracious eyes!—Thou leavest me then;
Thou leavest me, Sigismunda!

Sigis. Yet a moment—
I had, my Tancred, something more to say—
Yes—but thy love and tenderness for me
Sure makes it needless—Harbour no resentment
Against my father; venerate his zeal,
That acted from a principle of goodness,
From faithful love to thee—Live and maintain
My innocence imbalm'd, with holiest care
Preserve my spotless memory!—I die—
Eternal Mercy take my trembling soul!
Oh! 'tis the only sting of death to part
From those we love—from thee—farewell, my
Tancred! [*Dies.*]

Tan. Thus then!

[*Flying to his sword, is held by RODOLPHO.*]

Rod. Hold! hold! my lord!—Have you forgot
Your Sigismunda's last request already?

Tan. Off! set me free! Think not to bind me
down,

With barbarous friendship, to the rack of life!
What hand can shut the thousand thousand gates,
Which death still opens to the woes of mortals!—
I shall find means—No power in earth or heaven
Can force me to endure the hateful light,
Thus robb'd of all that lent it joy and sweetness!

Off! traitors! off! or my distracted soul
Will burst indignant from this jail of nature,
To where she beckons yonder—No, mild seraph!
Point not to life—I cannot linger here,
Cut off from thee, the miserable pity,
The scorn of human kind!—A trampled king!
Who let his mean poor-hearted love, one moment,
To coward prudence stoop; who made it not
The first undoubting action of his reign,
To snatch thee to his throne, and there to shield
thee,

Thy helpless bosom from a ruffian's fury!—
O shame! O agony! O the fell stings
Of late, of vain repentance!—Ha! my brain
Is all on fire! a wild abyss of thought!
The infernal world discloses! See! behold him!
Lo! with fierce smiles he shakes the bloody steel,
And mocks my feeble tears!—Hence! quickly,
hence!

Spurn his vile carcass! give it to the dogs!
Expose it to the winds and screaming ravens!
Or hurl it down that fiery steep to hell,
There with his soul to toss in flames for ever!—
Ah, impotence of rage!—What am I? where?
Sad, silent, all? The forms of dumb despair,
Around some mournful tomb! What do I see?
This soft abode of innocence and love
Turn'd to the house of death! a place of horror!—
Ah! that poor corpse! pale! pale! deform'd with
murder!

Is that my Sigismunda?

[*Throwing himself down by her.*]

Sif. (after a pathetic pause, looking on the
scene before him.) Have I lived
To these enfeebled years, by Heaven reserved
To be a dreadful monument of justice!—
Rodolpho, raise the king, and bear him hence
From this distracting scene of blood and death.
Alas! I dare not give him my assistance;
My care would only more inflame his rage.

Behold the fatal work of my dark hand,
That by rude force the passions would command,
That ruthless sought to root them from the
breast;

They may be ruled, but will not be oppress.
Taught hence, ye parents, who from nature stray,
And the great ties of social life betray;
Ne'er with your children act a tyrant's part:
'Tis yours to guide, not violate the heart:
Ye vainly wise who o'er mankind preside,
Behold my righteous woes, and drop your pride!
Keep virtue's simple path before your eyes,
Nor think from evil good can ever rise.

EPILOGUE.

CRAMM'D to the throat with wholesome moral stuff,
 Alas ! poor audience ! you have had enough.
 Was ever hapless heroine of a play
 In such a piteous plight as ours to-day ?
 Was ever woman so by love betray'd ?
 Match'd with two husbands, and yet—die a maid.
 But bless me !—hold—What sounds are these I hear !
 I see the Tragic Muse herself appear.

The back-scene opens, and discovers a romantic sylvan landscape ; from which Mrs. Cibber, in the character of the Tragic Muse, advances slowly to music, and speaks the following lines :

Hence with your flippant epilogue, that tries
 To wipe the virtuous tear from British eyes ;
 That dares my mortal tragic scene profane,
 With strains—at best, unsuited, light and vain.
 Hence from the pure unsullied beams that play
 In yon fair eyes where virtue shines—Away !

Britons, to you from chaste Castalian groves,
 Where dwell the tender, oft unhappy loves ;
 Where shades of heroes roam, each mighty name,
 And court my aid to rise again to fame ;
 To you I come, to freedom's noblest seat,
 And in Britannia fix my last retreat.

In Greece and Rome, I watch'd the public weal ;
 The purple tyrant trembled at my steel :
 Nor did I less o'er private sorrows reign,
 And mend the melting heart with softer pain.
 On France and You then rose my brightening star,
 With social ray. The arts are ne'er at war.
 Oh, as your fire and genius stronger blaze,
 As yours are generous freedom's bolder lays,
 Let not the Gallic taste leave yours behind,
 In decent manners and in life refined ;
 Banish the motley mode, to tag low verse,
 The laughing ballad to the mournful hearse.
 When through five acts your hearts have learnt to glow,
 Touch'd with the sacred force of honest woe ;
 O keep the dear impression on your breast,
 Nor idly lose it for a wretched jest.

CORIO LAN US .

A Tragedy.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

CAIUS MARCIUS CORIO LAN US.

ATTIUS TULLUS, *General of the Volscian army.*

GALESUS, *one of the Deputies of the Volscian States attending the camp.*

The other Deputies of the Volscian States.

VOLUSIUS, *one of the principal Volscian officers.*

TITUS, *freed-man of Galesus.*

MARCUS MINUCIUS, *Consul and principal of the Deputation from Rome to Coriolanus.*

POSTHUMUS COMINIUS, *a Consular Senator, one of the Deputation, and who had been the Roman General at the taking of Corioli.*

VETURIA, *mother of Coriolanus.*

VOLUMNIA, *wife of Coriolanus.*

Roman Senators, Priests, Augurs, &c., *of the first Deputation.* Roman Ladies *in the train of VETURIA and VOLUMNIA, of the second Deputation.*

Volscian Officers, Lictors, Soldiers, &c.

SCENE.—*The Volscian Camp.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.

The Volscian Camp.

ATTIUS TULLUS, VOLUSIUS.

Vol. WHENCE is it, Tullus, that our arms are Here on the borders of the Roman state? [stopp'd Why sleeps that spirit whose heroic ardour Urged you to break the truce, and pour'd our host, From all the united cantons of the Volsci, On their unguarded frontier? Such designs Brook not an hour's delay; their whole success Depends on instant vigorous execution.

Tul. Volusius, I approve thy brave impatience: And will to thee, in confidence of friendship, Disclose my secret soul. Thou know'st Galesus, Whose freedom Caius Marcius, once his guest, Of all the spoil of sack'd Corioli, Alone demanded; and who thence to Rome, From gratitude and friendship, follow'd Marcius; Whence lately to our Antium he return'd, With overtures of peace proposed by Rome.

Vol. I know him well; an antiquated sage Of that romantic school Pythagoras Establish'd here on our Hesperian shore; Whose gentle dictates only serve to tame Enfeebled mortals into slaves.

Tul. Galesus Doubtless possesses many civil virtues; Is gentle, good; for rectitude of heart And innocence of life by all revered.

Vol. Pardon me, Tullus, if my faithful bluntness Deems you too liberal in his praise. In peace Such may perhaps do well, when prating rules An idle world; but in tempestuous times They are stark naught, these visionary statesmen, Fit rulers only for their golden age. The rugged genius of rapacious Rome For other men, and other counsels, calls.

Tul. Your thoughts are mine—I only meant to tell thee

The part he bears in this ill-timed delay.

Soon as our gather'd armymarch'd from Antium, The Roman senate, whose attentive caution Watch'd all our motions, took at once the alarm! And sent a herald, ere we pass'd their borders, With formal ceremony, to demand The cause of our approach.—Had I been master, I would have answer'd at the gates of Rome. But this Galesus, who attends our camp Among the Volscian deputies, so pleaded The laws of nations, made such loud complaints Against the infraction of the public faith,

So teased us with the pedantry of states,
That I was forced, unwilling, to permit
His freedman, Titus, to be sent to Rome
With our demands. If these the senate grants,
We then are in the toils of peace entangled,
In spite of all my efforts to avoid them.

Vol. Oh, 'tis a wild chimera ! Peace with Rome !
Dream not of that, unless the Volscean courage
Is quite subdued, and only seeks to gild
A vile submission with that specious name.
Learn wisdom from your neighbours. Peace with
Rome

Has quell'd the Latines, tamed their free-born spirit,
And by her friendship honour'd them with chains.

Tul. She ne'er will grant it on the just conditions
I now have brought the Volsci to demand :
The restitution of our conquer'd cities,
And fair alliance upon equal terms.

I know the Roman insolence will scorn
To yield to this : and Titus must return,
Within three days, the longest term allow'd him ;
Of which the third is near elapsed already.
Then even Galesus will not dare to stop us
With superstitious forms, and solemn trifles,
From letting loose the unbridled rage of war
Against those hated tyrants of Hesperia.

Vol. Thanks to the gods ! my sword will then be
Then, poor Corioli ! thy bleeding wounds, [free.
Thy treasures sack'd, thy captivated matrons,
Shall amply be revenged by thy Volusius ;
Then, Tullus, from the lofty brows of Marcius
Thou mayst regain the wreath his conquering hand,
By partial fortune aided, tore from thine.

Tul. O my Volusius ! thou, who art a soldier,
A tried and brave one too, say, in thy heart
Dost thou not scorn me ? thou who saw'st me bend
Beneath the half-spent thunder of a foe,
Warm from the conquest of Corioli,
Which, rushing furious in with those whose sally
He had repell'd, he seized almost alone,
And gave to fire and sword. Yet thence he flew
Scorning the plunder of our richest city,
His wounds undress'd, without a moment's respite,
To where our armies on the fearful edge
Of battle stood ; and, asking of the consul
To be opposed to me, with mighty rage,
Resistless, bore us down.

Vol. True valour, Tullus,
Lies in the mind, the never-yielding purpose,
Nor owns the blind award of giddy fortune.

Tul. My soul, my friend, my soul is all on fire !
Thirst of revenge consumes me ! the revenge
Of generous emulation, not of hatred.
This happy Roman, this proud Marcius haunts me.
Each troubled night when slaves and captives sleep,
Forgetful of their chains, I, in my dreams,
Anew am vanquish'd ; and, beneath the sword
With horror sinking, feel a tenfold death,
The death of honour. But I will redeem—
Yes, Marcius, I will yet redeem my fame.
To face thee once again is the great purpose
For which alone I live—Till then how slow, [me,
How tedious lags the time ! while shame corrodes
With many a bitter thought ; and injured honour
Sick and desponding preys upon itself.

Vol. It fast approaches now, the hour of vengeance,
To this famed land, to ancient Latium due.
Unbalanced Rome, at variance with herself,
To order lost, in deep and hot commotion,

Stands on the dangerous point of civil war ;
Her haughty nobles, and seditious commons
Reviling, fearing, hating one another ;
While, on our part, all wears a prosperous face ;
Our troops united, numerous, high in spirit,
As if their general's soul inform'd them all.
O long-expected day !

Tul. Go, brave Volusius,
Go breathe thy ardour into every breast,
That when the Volscean envoy shall return,
Whom ere the close of evening I expect,
One spirit may unite us in the cause
Of generous freedom, and our native rights,
So long oppress'd by Rome's encroaching power.

SCENE II.

Tul. (alone.) Galesus said that Marcius stands
for consul.

Oh favour thou his suit, propitious Jove !
That I may brave him at his army's head,
In all the majesty of sovereign power !
That the whole conduct of the war may rest
On us alone, and prove by its decision,
Which of the two is worthiest to command —

SCENE III.

TULLUS, Officer.

Tul. Ha ! why this haste ? you look alarm'd.
Off. My lord,

One of exalted port, his visage hid,
Has placed himself upon your sacred hearth,
Beneath the dread protection of your Lares ;
And sits majestic there in solemn silence.

Tul. Did you not ask him who, and what he was ?

Off. My lord, I could not speak ; I felt appall'd,
As if the presence of some god had struck me.

Tul. Come, dastard ! let me find this man of
terrors.

SCENE IV.

*The back-scene opens and discovers CORIOLANUS as described
above.*

CORIOLANUS, TULLUS.

Tul. (after some silence.) Illustrious stranger—
for thy high demeanour

Bespeaks thee such—who art thou ?

Cor. (rising and unsmuffing his face.) View
me, Tullus— *(After some pause.)*

Dost thou not know me ?

Tul. No. That noble front
I never saw before. What is thy name ?

Cor. Does not the secret voice of hostile instinct,
Does not thy swelling heart declare me to thee ?

Tul. Gods ! can it be ?—

Cor. Yes. I am Caius Marcius ;
Known to thy smarting country by the name
Of Coriolanus. That alone is left me,
That empty name, for all my toils, my service,
The blood which I have shed for thankless Rome.
Behold me banish'd thence, a victim yielded
By her weak nobles to the maddening rabble.
I seek revenge. Thou mayst employ my sword,

With keener edge, with heavier force against her,
Than e'er it fell upon the Volscian nation.
But if thou, Tullus, dost refuse me this,
The only wish of my collected heart,
Where every passion in one burning point
Concentres, give me death : death from thy hand
I sure have well deserved—Nor shall I blush
To take or life or death from Attius Tullus.

Tul. O Caius Marcius ! in this one short moment,
That we have friendly talk'd, my ravish'd heart
Has undergone a great, a wondrous change.
I ever held thee in my best esteem ;
But this heroic confidence has won me,
Stamp'd me at once thy friend. I were indeed
A wretch as mean as this thy trust is noble,
Could I refuse thee thy demand—Yes, Marcius !
Thou hast thy wish ! take half of my command :
If that be not enough, then take the whole.
We have, my friend, a gallant force on foot,
An army, Marcius, fit to follow thee.
Go lead them on, and take thy full revenge.
All should unite to punish the ungrateful ;
Ingratitude is treason to mankind.

Cor. (*embracing him.*) Thus, generous Tullus,
take a soldier's thanks,
Who is not practised in the gloss of words—
Thou friend in deed ! friend to my cause, my
quarrel !

Friend to the darling passion of my soul !
All else I set at nought !—Immortal gods !
I am new-made, and wonder at myself !
A little while ago, and I was nothing ;
A powerless reptile, crawling on the earth,
Cursed with a soul that restless wish'd to wield
The bolts of Jove ! I dwelt in Erebus,
I wander'd through the hopeless gloom of hell,
Stung with revenge, tormented by the furies !
Now, Tullus, like a god, you draw me thence,
Throne me amidst the skies, with tempest charged,
And put the ready thunder in my hand !

Tul. What I have promised, Marcius, I will do.
Within an hour at farthest we expect
The freedman of Galesus back from Rome,
Who carried to the senate our demands.
Their answer will, I doubt not, end the truce,
And instant draw our angry swords against them.
Till then retire within my inmost tent,
Unknown to all but me, that when our chiefs
Meet in full council to declare for war,
I may produce thee to their wondering eyes,
As if descended from avenging Heaven
To humble lofty Rome, and teach her justice.

Cor. To thy direction, Tullus, I resign
My future life : my fate is in thy hands ;
And, if I judge aright, the fate of Rome.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

GALÆSUS, TITUS.

Gal. INDEED ! my Titus, I had hopes that
Rome,

Vext as she is with her domestic broils,
Her frontier weak, her armies unprepared,
Might have complied with our demands, and given
The same alliance granted to the Latines. [us

Tit. The senate scarce would hear the terms I
offer'd ;

But order'd me to bear this answer back :
“ If first the Volsci take up arms, the Romans
Will be the last to lay them down.”

Gal. Alas !
This answer seals the doom of many a wretch.
Unchain'd Bellona from her temple rushes,
With all the crimes and vices in her train.
Earth fades at her approach. To rural peace,
Fair plenty, and the social joy of cities,
Soon will succeed rage, rapine, devastation,
Each cruel horror sanctified by names.
O mortals ! mortals ! when will you, content
With nature's bounty, that in fuller flow,
Still as your labours open more its sources,
Abundant gushes o'er the happy world ;
When will you banish violence and outrage,
To dwell with beasts of prey in woods and deserts ?
Tit. Never till Rome shall change her conquer-
ing maxims.

Gal. Her haughty spirit now will soar beyond
Its usual pitch, upborne by Caius Marcius.
Stands he not for the consulate ?

Tit. He did ;
But is no more a citizen of Rome.

Gal. What mean'st thou, Titus ?

Tit. Marcius is from Rome
Banish'd for ever.

Gal. O immortal powers !
On what pretence could they to exile doom
Their wisest captain, and their bravest soldier ?
Nor less renown'd for piety, for justice,
An uncorrupted heart, and purest manners.

Tit. The charge against him was entirely
groundless,

What not his enemies themselves believed,
Affecting of tyrannic power in Rome.
His real crime was only some hot words,
Struck from his fiery temper, in the senate,
Against those factious ministers of discord,
The tribunes of the people. They to rage,
And frantic fury, roused the mad plebeians ;
By whom supported in their bold attempt,
They durst presume to summon to the bar
Of an enraged and partial populace,
The most illustrious senator of Rome.
To this the nobles yielded—and, with his,
Gave up their own and children's rights for ever.

Gal. Oh, shameful weakness in a Roman senate,
So much renown'd for firmness ! yet my Titus,
Spite of my love to Marcius, I must own it,
The vigorous soil whence his heroic virtues
Luxuriant rise, if not with careful hand
Severely weeded, teems with imperfections.
His lofty spirit brooks no opposition.
His rage, if once offended, knows no bounds.
He deems plebeian, with patrician blood
Compared, the creatures of a lower species,
Mere menial hands by nature meant to serve him.

Tit. It was this high patrician pride undid him.
The furious people triumph'd in his ruin,
As if they had expell'd another Tarquin :

While, like a captive train, the vanquish'd nobles
Hung their dejected heads in silent shame.
Marcius alone seem'd unconcern'd ; though deep
The latent tempest boil'd within his breast,
Choked up and smother'd with excessive rage.

Gal. You were his guest at Rome, and therefore,
Titus,
Might on this sad occasion be permitted
To join your tears with his domestic friends.
Saw you that moving scene ?

Tit. I did, Galesus.
I follow'd Marcius home—His mother, there,
Veturia, the most venerable matron
These eyes have e'er beheld, and soft Volumnia,
His lovely virtuous wife, amidst his children,
Spread on the ground, lay lost in dumb despair.
He swelling stood a while, and could not speak,
The affronted hero struggling with the man ;
Then thus at last he broke the gloomy silence :
" 'Tis done. The guilty sentence is pronounced,
Ungrateful Rome has cast me from her bosom.
Support this blow with fortitude and courage,
As it becomes two generous Roman matrons :
I recommend my children to your care.
Farewell. I go, I quit, without regret,
A city grown an enemy to virtue."

Gal. Oh, godlike Marcius ! oh, unconquer'd
strength

And dignity of mind ! How much superior
Is such a soul to all the power of fortune !

Tit. This said, he sternly tried to break away :
When, holding in his hand his eldest son,
Veturia follow'd ; while the poor Volumnia,
All drown'd in tears, and bearing in one arm
Their youngest, yet an infant, with the other
Hung clinging at his knees—he turning to them,
Half soften'd, half severe, breathed from his soul
These broken accents— "Cease your vain com-
plaints,

Mother, you have no more a son ; and thou,
Thou best of women ! thou, my dear Volumnia !
No more a husband."—Pierced with these dire
words

Volumnia lifeless sunk : and off he flung,
With wild precipitation.

Gal. Thy sad tale
Blinds my old eyes with tears—But whither, tell
O whither, Titus, bent he then his course ? [me,

Tit. Where the blind genius of regardless rage
And desperation led. On to the gate
Capena call'd, attended by the nobles,
He stalk'd in sullen majesty along ;
Nor deign'd a word. A godlike virtuous anger
Beam'd through his features, and sublimed his air.
With downcast eyes he walk'd ; or, if aside
He chanced to look, each look was great reproach.
Thus in emphatic silence, that made words
Void and insipid all, he parted from them,
The day preceding my return from Rome ;
Nor has been heard of since, lost in the abyss
Of his own woes.

Gal. O Marcius, noble Marcius !
How shall my friendship succour thy distress ?
Where shall I find thee to partake thy sorrows,
And make myself companion of thy exile ?

But, Titus, we indulge discourse too long—
Go, and assemble thou the Volscian chiefs,
Whilst I repair to Tullus, to inform,
And bring him to the council, there to hear
The fatal answer thou hast brought from Rome.

SCENE II.

Changes to TULLUS'S Tent.

CORIOLANUS, TULLUS.

Cor. Forgive me, Tullus, if I count the moments
That stop the purpose of thy noble kindness,
And keep me here confined in tame inaction.
Why lingers Titus ?

Tul. Calm thy restless heart,
Brave Marcius ; every minute I expect him.
Soon from the cloud that hides thee, shalt thou break
With double brightness ; soon thy fiery rage
Shall wither all the strength and pride of Rome.

Cor. O righteous Jove, protector of the injured !
If from my earliest youth, with pious awe,
I still have revered thy all-powerful justice,
Still by her sacred dictates ruled my actions ;
O let that justice now support my cause,
And arm my strong right-hand with all her terrors !
When that is done, be life or death my lot,
As thy almighty pleasure shall determine.

[Enter an Officer to TULLUS.

Off. My lord, Galesus asks admittance to you.
Marcius, retire an instant, till I hear

The business brings him hither—Bid him enter.

[Exit Officer and CORIOLANUS.

[Enter GALEsus.

SCENE III.

TULLUS, GALEsus.

Gal. Tullus, the Roman senate has return'd
No other answer, to our late demands,
But absolute denial and defiance.

Tul. It is what I expected—We shall teach them
An humbler language soon—Hast thou assembled,
As I desired, the Volscian chiefs in council ?

Gal. Titus is gone to summon their attendance.

Tul. It is enough ; come forth, my noble guest !
And show Galesus how the gods assist us.

SCENE IV.

CORIOLANUS, TULLUS, GALEsus.

Gal. Oh, my astonish'd soul ! what do I see ?
What ! Caius Marcius ! Caius Marcius here,
Beneath one tent with Tullus !

Tul. Ay, and more,
With Tullus, now his friend and fellow-soldier.
Yes, thou shalt see him thundering at the head
Of Volscian armies—he, who oft has carried
Destruction through their ranks—Your leave a
moment,
While to our chiefs and fathers I announce
Their unexpected guest.

SCENE V.

CORIOLANUS, GALEsus.

Cor. Thou good old man !
Close let me strain thee to my faithful heart,
Which now is doubly thine, united more
By the protection which thy country gives me,
Than by our former friendship.

Gal.

Strange event !

This is thy work, almighty Providence !
Whose power, beyond the stretch of human thought,
Revolves the orbs of empire ; bids them sink
Deep in the deadening night of thy displeasure,
Or rise majestic o'er a wondering world.
The gods by thee—I see it, Coriolanus—
Mean to exalt us, and depress the Romans.

Cor. Galesus, yes, the gods have sent me hither ;
Those righteous gods, who, when vindictive justice
Excites them to destroy a worthless people,
Make their own crimes and follies strike the blow.

Gal. Cherish those thoughts that teach us what
we are,

And tame the pride of man. There is a power
Unseen that rules the illimitable world,
That guides its motions, from the brightest star,
To the least dust of this sin-tainted mold ;
While man, who madly deems himself the lord
Of all, is nought but weakness and dependance.
This sacred truth, by sure experience taught,
Thou must have learnt, when, wandering all alone,
Each bird, each insect, flitting through the sky,
Was more sufficient for itself than thou—
Ah the full image of thy woes dissolves me !
The pangs that must have torn, at parting from
thee,

Thy mother and thy wife. I cannot think
Of that sad scene, without some drops of pity !

Cor. Who was it forced me to that bitter
parting ?

Who, in one cruel, hasty moment, chased me
From wife, from children, friends, and household
gods,

Me ! who so often had protected theirs ?
Who, from the sacred city of my fathers,
Drove me with nature's commoners to dwell,
To lodge beneath their wide unshelter'd roof,
And at their table feed ? O blast me, gods !
With every woe ! debility of mind,
Dishonour, just contempt, and palsied weakness,
If I forgive the villains ! yes, Galesus,
Yes, I will offer to the powers of vengeance
A great, a glorious victim—a whole city !—
Why, Tullus, this delay ?

Gal.

May Coriolanus

Be to the Volscian nation, and himself,
The dread, the godlike instrument of justice !
But let not rage and vengeance mix their rancour ;
Let them not trouble with their fretful storm,
Their angry gleams, that azure, where enthroned
The calm divinity of justice sits,
And pities, while she punishes, mankind.

Cor. What saidst thou ? What, against the
powers of vengeance ?

The gods gave honest anger, just revenge,
To be the awful guardians of the rights
And native dignity of human kind.
O were it not for them, the saucy world
Would grow a noisome nest of little tyrants !
Each carrion crow, on eagle merit perch'd,
Would peck his eyes out, and the mongrel cur
At pleasure bait the lion—No, Galesus,
I would not rashly, nor on light occasion,
Receive the deep impression in my breast ;
But when the base, the brutal and unjust,
Or worse than all, the ungrateful, stamp it there ;
O I will then, with luxury supreme,
Enjoy the pleasure of offended gods,
A righteous, just revenge !—Behold my soul.

Enter an Officer.

Off. My lords, the assembled chiefs desire your
presence.

Gal. Come, noble Marcius ; let my joyful hand
Conduct thee thither—Doubt not thy reception
Will be proportion'd to thy fame and merit.

SCENE VI.

The back-scene opens, and discovers the Deputies of the Volscian States assembled in council. They rise and salute CORIOLANUS ; then resume their places.

GALESUS, TULLUS, CORIOLANUS, Senators.

Gal. Assembled states, and captains of the Volsci,
Behold the chief so much renown'd in war ;
Our once so formidable foe, but now
Our proffer'd friend and soldier—Caius Marcius.

1st Sen. We give him hearty welcome from
our souls.

Cor. Most noble chiefs, and fathers of the Volsci,
I need not say, how by the people's rage,
And the poor weakness of the timid nobles,
I am expell'd from Rome. Had I confined
My wishes merely to a safe retreat,
Some Latine city might have given me that ;
Or any nameless corner. What imports it,
Where a tame patient exile rots in silence !
But, Volscian lords, permit me to declare,
I would at once cut short my useless days,
Rather than be that despicable wretch,
Who neither can take vengeance on his foes,
Nor serve his friends. That is my temper, chiefs.
I shall be glad to merit, by my sword,
The asylum which I seek among the Volsci.
Rome is our common foe. Then let us join
Our common sufferings, passions, and resentments.
Yes, though but one, I bring so many wrongs,
So large a share of powerful enmity,
Into the war, as gives me the presumption,
To offer to the Volscian states the alliance
Even of my single arm.—

Tul.

That single arm

Is in itself a numerous army, Marcius ;
The Volscians so esteem it.—But proceed.

Cor. I will not mention, Volscian chiefs, what
talent

The world allows me to possess in war :
But be that what it will, you may employ it.
Soldier, or captain, in whatever station
You place me, I will lose each drop of blood,
Or with this hand I'll fix the Volscian standard
On the proud towers of Capitoline Jove.

Tul. Chiefs of the Volscian league, I give you
Of our new citizen, the noble Marcius. [Joy
The genius of the Volscian state has sent him,
Whetted by wrongs into a keener hatred
Than that we bear to Rome. It were contemning,
With impious self-sufficient arrogance,
This bounty of the gods, not to accept,
With every mark of honour, of his service.
I, Volscians, I, even Attius Tullus, give,
First of you all, my voice, that Caius Marcius
Be now received to high command among us ;
That instantly we do appoint him general
Of half our troops, which here, with your consent,
I to him yield.—Speak, chiefs, is this your
pleasure ?

1st Sen. It is—We give unanimous consent.

Tul. (embracing him.) Marcius, I joy to call thee
And colleague in this war. [my companion,

Cor. By all the gods !

Thou art the generous victor of my soul !

Yes, Tullus, I am conquer'd by thy virtue.

Gal. Though I have oft, on great occasions,
Beheld thee in the senate, and the field, [Tullus,
Cover'd with glory ; yet, I must avow,
I never saw thee show such genuine greatness,
Such true sublimity of soul, as now.

To scorn the all powerful charm of selfish passions,
Chiefly the dazzling pride of emulation,
That noble weakness of heroic minds,
To sink thyself that thou mayst raise thy country ;
To put the sword into thy rival's hand,
And twine thy promised laurels round his brow—
O 'tis a flight beyond the highest point
Of martial glory ! and what few can reach.

Go forth, ye chosen ministers of justice ;
And may that awful Power, whose secret hand
Sways all our passions, turns our partial views
All to its own dread purposes, attend you !

Cor. I burn to enter on the glorious task
You now have mark'd me out. How slow the
time

To the warm soul, that, in the very instant

It forms, would execute, a great design.

'Tis my advice we march direct to Rome ;

We cannot be too quick. Let the first dawn

See us in bright array before her walls.

Perhaps when they behold their exile there,
Back'd by your force, some conscious hearts among
May feel the alarm of guilt. [them

Tul. I much approve
Of this advice. 'Tis what I thought before,
Ere strengthen'd, Marcius, by thy mighty arm :
But now 'tis doubly right. Here, Volscian chiefs,
Here let our council terminate—The troops
Have had repose sufficient. Straight to Rome—
Come, let us urge our march—As yet the stars
Ride in their middle watch ; we shall with ease
Reach it by dawn—

Cor. Yes, we have time—too much !
Six tedious hours till morn—But hence ! away !
My soul on fire anticipates the dawn.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

CORIOLANUS, TULLUS, VOLUSIUS, TITUS, with a crowd of
Volscian Officers. Acclamations behind the scenes.

Cor. No more—I merit not this lavish praise.

True, we have driven the Roman legions back,

Defeated and disgraced—But what is this ?

Nothing, ye Volsci, nothing yet is done.

We but begin the wondrous leaf of story,

That marks the Roman doom. At length it dawns,

The destined hour, that eases of their fears

The nations round, and sets Hesperia free.

Come on, my brave companions of the war !

Come, let us finish at one mighty stroke

This toil of labouring fate.—We will, or perish !

While, noble Tullus, you protect the camp,

I, with my troops, all men of chosen valour,

And well approved to-day, will storm the city.

Tit. Beneath thy animating conduct, Marcius,

What can the Volscian valour not perform ?

Thy very sight and voice subdues the Romans.

When, lifting up your helm, you show'd your face,

That like a comet glared destruction on them,

I saw their bravest veterans fly before thee.

Their ancient spirit has with thee forsook them,
And ruin hangs o'er you devoted walls.

Enter an Officer, who addresses himself to CORIOLANUS.

Off. My lord, a herald is arrived from Rome,
To say, a deputation from the senate,
Attended by the ministers of Heaven,
A venerable train of priests and flamens,
Is on the way, address'd to you.

Cor. To me !

What can this message mean ! Stand to your arms,
Ye Volscian troops ; and let these Romans pass
Betwixt the lowering frown of double files.

What ! do they think me such a milky boy,
To pay my vengeance with a few soft words ?

Come, fellow soldiers, Tullus, come, and see,
If I betray the honours you have done me.

[Goes out with a train of Volscian Officers.]

SCENE II.

TULLUS, VOLUSIUS, who remain.

Vol. (after some silence.) Are we not, Tullus,
failing in our duty

Not to attend our general ?

Tul. How ! what saidst thou ?

Vol. Methought, my lord, his parting orders
were,

We should attend the triumph now preparing

O'er all his foes at once—Romans and Volsci !

Come, we shall give offence.

Tul. Of this no more.

I pray thee spare thy bitter irony.

Vol. Shall I then speak without disguise ?

Tul. Speak out

With all the honest bluntness of a friend.

Think'st thou I fear the truth ?

Vol. Then, Tullus, know,

Thou art no more the general of the Volsci.

Thou hast, by this thy generous weakness, sunk

Thyself into a private man of Antium.

Yes, thou hast taken from thy laurel'd brow

The well-earn'd trophies of thy toils and perils,

Thy springing hopes, the fairest ever budded,

And heap'd them on a man too proud before.

Tul. He bears it high.

Vol. Death and perdition ! high !

With uncontrol'd command !—You see, already,

He will not be incumber'd with the fetters

Of our advice. He speaks his sovereign will ;

On every hand he issues out his orders,

As to his natural slaves.—For you, my lord,

He has, I think, confined you to your camp,

There in inglorious indolence to languish ;

While he, beneath your blasted eyes, shall reap

The harvest of your honour.

Tul. No, Volusius,

Whatever honour shall by him be gain'd

Reverts to me, from whose superior bounty

He drew the means of all his glorious deeds.

This mighty chief, this conqueror of Rome,
Is but my creature.—

Vol. Wretched self-delusion !
He and the Volscians know he is thy master.
He acts as such in all things.—Now, by Mars,
Could my abhorrent soul endure the thought
Of stooping to a Roman chief, I here
Would leave thee in thy solitary camp,
And go where glory calls.

Tul. Indeed, Volusius,
I did expect more equal treatment from him.
But what of that ?—The generous pride of virtue
Disdains to weigh too nicely the returns
Her bounty meets with—Like the liberal gods,
From her own gracious nature she bestows,
Nor stoops to ask reward—Yet must I own,
I thought he would not have so soon forgot
What he so lately was, and what I am.

Vol. Gods ! knew ye not his character before ?
Did you not know his genius was to yours
Averse, as are antipathies in nature ?
High, over-weening, tyrannously proud,
And only fit to hold command o'er slaves ?
Hence, as repugnant to that equal life,
Which is the quickening soul of all republics,
The Roman people cast him forth ; and we,
Shall we receive the bane of their repose,
Into our breast ? Are we less free than they ?
Or shall we be more patient of a tyrant ?

Tul. All this I knew. But while his imperfections

Are thy glad theme, thou hast forgot his virtues.

Vol. I leave that subject to the smooth Galesus,
And these his Volscian flatterers—His virtues !
Trust me there is no insolence that treads
So high as that which rears itself on virtue.

Tul. Well, be it so—I meant, that even his vices
Should, on this great occasion, serve the Volsci.

Vol. Confusion ! there it is ! there lurks the sting

Of our dishonour ! While this Marcius leads
The Roman armies, ours are driven before him.
Behold, he changes sides ; when with him changes
The fortune of the war. Straight they grow Volsci,
And we victorious Romans—Such no doubt,
Such is his secret boast—Ay, this vile brand
Success itself will fix for ever on us ;
And, Tullus, thou, 'tis thou must answer for it.

Tul. (aside.) His words are daggers to my heart ; I feel

Their truth, but am ashamed to own my folly.

Vol. O shame ! O infamy ! the thought consumes me,

It scalds my eyes with tears, to see a Roman
Borne on our shoulders to immortal fame :
Just in the happy moment that decided
The long dispute of ages, that for which
Our generous ancestors had toil'd and bled,
To see him then step in and steal our glory !
O that we first had perish'd all ! A people,
Who cannot find in their own proper force
Their own protection, are not worth the saving !

Tul. It must have way ! I will no more suppress it—

Know then, my rough old friend, no less than
His conduct hurts me and upbraids my folly. [Thee
I wake as from a dream. What demon moved me ?
What dotting generosity ? his woes,
Was it his woes ? To see the brave reduced
To trust his mortal foe ? perhaps, a little

That work'd within my bosom—But, Volusius,
That was not all—I will to thee confess
The weakness of my heart—Yes, it was pride,
The dazzling pride to see my rival-warrior,
The great Coriolanus, bend his soul,
His haughty soul, to sue for my protection.
Protection, said I ? were it that alone,
I had been base to have refused him that,
To have refused him aught a gallant foe
Owes to a gallant foe.—But to exalt him
To the same level, nay, above myself ;
To yield him the command of half my troops,
The choicest acting half—That, that was madness !
Was weak, was mean, unworthy of a man !—

Vol. I scorn to flatter thee—It was indeed.

Tul. Curse on the slave Galesus ! soothing, he
Seized the fond moment of infatuation,
And clinch'd the chains my generous folly forged.
How shall I from this labyrinth escape ?
Must it then be ! what cruel genius dooms me,
In war or peace, to creep beneath his fortune !

Vol. That genius is thyself. If thou canst bear
The very thought of stooping to this Roman,
Thou from that moment art his vassal, Tullus ;
By that thou dost acknowledge parent nature
Has form'd him thy superior. But if fix'd
Upon the base of manly resolution,
Thou say'st—I will be free ! I will command !
I and my country ! then—O never doubt it—
We shall find means to crush this vain intruder !
Even I myself—this hand—

Nay, hear me, Tullus,

'Tis not yet come to that, that last resource.

I do not say we should employ the dagger,
While other, better means are in our power.

Tul. No, my Volusius, fortune will not drive us,
Or I am much deceived, to that extreme :

We shall not want the strongest fairest plea,
To give a solemn sanction to his fate.

He will betray himself. Whate'er his rage
Of passion talks, a weakness for his country
Sticks in his soul, and he is still a Roman.
Soon shall we see him tempted to the brink
Of this sure precipice—Then down, at once,
Without remorse, we hurl him to perdition !

But hark ! the trumpet calls us to a scene
I should detest, if not from hope we thence
May gather matter to mature our purpose.

SCENE III.

The back-scene opens, and discovers CORIOLANUS sitting on his tribunal, attended by his Lictors, and a crowd of Volscian Officers. Files of troops drawn up on either hand. In the depth of the scene appear the Deputies from the Roman Senate, M. MINUCIUS, POSTHUMUS COMINIUS, SP. LARTIUS, P. PINNARIUS, and Q. SULPITIUS, all Consular Senators, who had been his most zealous friends. And behind them march the Priests, the Sacrificers, the Augurs, and the Guardians of the sacred things, dressed in their ceremonial habits. These advance slowly betwixt the files of Soldiers, under arms. As TULLUS enters, CORIOLANUS, rising, salutes him.

Cor. Here, noble Tullus, sit and judge my con-
Nor spare to check me, if I act amiss. [duet ;

Tul. Marcius, the Volscian fate is in thy hands.

[CORIOLANUS is seated again, and TULLUS places himself upon a tribunal on his left hand. Meantime the Roman Deputies advance up to CORIOLANUS and salute him, which he returns.

Cor. What, Romans, from the generals of the
Is your demand ? [Volsci]

Min. O Coriolanus, Rome,
Nurse of thy tender years, thy parent-city,
Her senators, her people, priests, and augurs,
Her every order and degree, by us,
Thy ever-zealous, still unshaken friends,
Sue in the most pathetic terms for peace.
And if in this constrain'd, we from our maxim,
Never to ask but give it, must depart ;
It is some consolation, in the state
To which thou hast by thy superior valour
Reduced us, that we ask it from a Roman.

Cor. I was a Roman once, and thought the name
Was not dishonour'd by me ; but it pleased
Your lords, the mob of Rome, to take it from me ;
Nor will I now receive it back again.

Min. The name thou mayst reject, but canst
not throw

The duties from thee which that name imports ;
Indissoluble duties, bound upon thee
By the strong hand of nature, and confirm'd
By the dread sanction of all-ruling Jove.
Then hear thy country's supplicating voice ;
By all those duties I conjure thee hear us.

Cor. Well—I will hear thee ; speak, declare thy
message.

Min. Give peace, give healing peace, to two
brave nations,

Fatigued with war, and sick of cruel deeds !
To carry on destruction's easy trade,
Afflict mankind, and scourge the world with war,
Is what each wicked, each ambitious man,
Who lets his furious passions loose, may do :
But in the flattering torrent of success,
To check his rage, and drop the avenging sword,
When a repenting people ask it of him,
That is the genuine bounty of a god.
Then urge no farther this your just resentment ;
Which, injured as you are, you needs must feel,
But never ought to carry into action,
Against your sacred country ; whence you drew
Your life, your virtues, every mortal good,
That very valour you employ against her.
Stop, Coriolanus, ere, beyond retreat,
You plunge yourself in crimes. To the fierce joy
Of vengeance push'd to barbarous excess,
Repentance will succeed, and sickening horror.
Consider too the slippery state of fortune.
The gods take pleasure oft, when haughty mortals
On their own pride erect a mighty fabric,
By slightest means, to lay their towering schemes
Low in the dust, and teach them they are nothing.
Return, thou virtuous Roman ! to the bosom
Of thy imploring country. Lo ! her arms
She fondly spreads to take thee back again,
And by redoubled love efface her harshness.
Return, and crown thee with the noblest wreath
Which glory can bestow—the palm of mercy !

Cor. Marcus Minucius, and ye other Romans,
Respected senators, and holy flames,
Attend, and take to your demand this answer :

Why court you me, the servant of the Volsci ?
It is to them that you must bend for peace,
Which on these only terms they will accord you.
"Restore the conquer'd lands, your former wars
Have ravish'd from them : from their towns and
cities,
Won by your arms, withdraw your colonies ;
And to the full immunities of Rome

Frankly admit them, as you have the Latines."
Then Romans, ye have peace, and not till then !
If these are terms which suit not your ambition,
They suit the state to which the Volscian arms
Have now reduced you—We have learn'd it from
Rome

To use our fortune, and command the vanquish'd.
Tul. (aside.) Death to my hopes ! I'm now his
slave for ever.

Cor. (addressing himself to the Volsci.) This,
my illustrious patrons and protectors,
Volsci, to you I owed. Permit me now
To do myself and injured honour justice.

[Turning again to the Romans.]

As to the liberty you idly vaunt
To give me of returning to your city,
'Tis what I hold unworthy of acceptance.
Can I return into the ungrateful bosom
Of a distracted state, where to the rage
Of a vile senseless populace, the laws
Are by your shameful weakness given a prey ?
Who are the men that hold the sway among you ?
And whom have you expell'd as even unworthy
To live within the cincture of your walls !—
O the wild thought breaks in and troubles reason !—
With what, ye Romans, can the sourest censor,
The most envenom'd malice, justly charge me ?
Did I e'er break your laws ? Nay, did I e'er
Do aught that could disturb the sacred order,
The peace and social harmony of life ;
Or taint your ancient sanctity of manners ?
What was my crime ? I could not bear to see
Your dignity debased, to see the rabble
Tread on the reverend grey authority
Of senatorial wisdom : Yes, for you,
In your defence I did enrage this monster ;
And yet you basely left me to its fury.
Then talk no more of services and friendship :
A friend, who can, and does not shield, betrays me.
Or if the power was wanting, then your senate
Is sunk into servility and bondage,
Nor should a freeman deign to sit among you.

Min. The wisest are sometimes compell'd to
yield

To popular storms : yet I defend not, Marcius,
Our timid conduct ; we have felt our error,
And now invite thee back to aid the senate,
With thy heroic spirit to restrain
The giddy rage of faction, and to hold
The reins of government more firm hereafter.

As to the appeal which thou hast nobly made
In vindication of thy spotless fame,
With pleasure we confirm it, and bear witness
To all thy public and thy private virtues :
But let us also beg thee not to stain
The brightness of that glory by a crime,
Which, unrepented, would disgrace them all ;
A dire rebellious war against thy country.

Cor. Absurd ! what can you mean ? To call a
people,

Who with the last indignity have used me,
To call my foes my country ! No, Minucius,
It is the generous nation of the Volsci ;
These brave, these virtuous men, you see around me,
Who, when I wander'd a poor helpless exile,
Took pity of my injuries and woes ;
Forgot the former mischiefs of my sword ;
Heap'd on me kindness, honours, dignities ;
Fear'd not to trust me with this high command,
And placed me here the guardian of their cause :—

Be witness, Jove !—It is alone their nation
I henceforth will acknowledge for my country !
Let this suffice.—You have my answer, Romans.

Com. This answer, Coriolanus, is the dictate
More of thy pride than magnanimity :
'Tis thy revenge that gives it, not thy virtue.
Art thou above the gods ? who joy to shower
Their double goodness on repenting mortals ?
But think not I intend by this to urge
Our proffer'd peace, so harshly treated, further ;
That were a weakness ill becoming Romans.
Yet I must tell thee, it would better suit
A fierce despotic chief of barbarous slaves,
Than the calm dignity of one who sits
In the grave senate of a free republic,
To talk so high, and as it were to thrust
Plebeians from the native rights of man.—

Cor. Ha ! dost thou come the people's advocate
To me, Cominius ! comest thou to insult me !

Com. Nay, hear me, Marcius :—These grey
hairs empower me
To set thee right before this great assembly :
And there was once a time, thou wouldst have heard
Thy general with more deference and patience—
I tell thee then, whoe'er amidst the sons
Of reason, valour, liberty, and virtue,
Displays distinguish'd merit, is a noble
Of nature's own creating. Such have risen,
Sprung from the dust ; or where had been our
honours ?

And such in radiant bands will rise again,
In yon immortal city, that, when most
Depress'd by fate, and near apparent ruin,
Returns, as with an energy divine,
On her astonish'd foes, and shakes them from her—
Your pardon, Volsci—But this, Coriolanus,
Is what I had to say.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Tul. (alone.) WHAT is the mind of man ? A
restless scene

Of vanity and weakness ; shifting still,
As shift the lights of our uncertain knowledge ;
Or as the various gale of passion breathes.

None ever thought himself more deeply founded
On what is right, nor felt a nobler ardour,
Than I, when I invested Caius Marcius
With this ill-judged command. Now it appears
Distraction, folly, monstrous folly ! meanness !
And down I plunge, betray'd even by my virtue,
From gulf to gulf, from shame to deeper shame.

SCENE II.

TULLUS, GALESUS.

Gal. I listen'd, Tullus, to the important scene
That lately pass'd before us, with most strict
Unprejudiced attention ; and have since
Revolved it in my mind, both as a man,
Allied to all mankind, and as a Volscian.
Indeed our terms are high, and by the manner
In which they were prescribed by Coriolanus,

Cor.

And I have heard it—

*[Rising from his tribunal ; and the Priests advancing
to address him, he prevents them.]*

For you, ye awful ministers of Heaven,
Let me not hear your holy lips profaned
By urging what my duty must refuse.
I bow in adoration to the gods ;
I venerate their servants. But there is,
There is a power, their chief, their darling care,
The guardian of mankind, which to betray
Were violating all—And that is justice.

So far my public character demands ;
So far my honour.—Now, what should forbid
The man, and friend, to be indulged a little ?
Permit me to embrace thee, good Minucius,
Thee, Lartius ; you, Pinnarius and Sulpitius :
But chiefly thee, Cominius, who first raised me
To deeds of arms : who from thy consular brow
Took thy own crown, and with it circled mine.
Though nought can shake my purpose, yet I wish
That Rome had sent me others on this errand.
I thank you for your friendship. The protection,
Which you have given to those, whom once I call'd
By tender names, I would not now remember.
How shall I—say—return your generous good-
Oh, there is nothing you, as friends, can ask, [ness ?
My grateful heart will not with pleasure grant you.

Com. We thank thee, Coriolanus—But a Roman
Disdains that favour you refuse his country.

Cor. *[To the Volscian Officers.]*
See that they be, with due regard and safety,
Conducted back. *[To the Roman Senators]*

I will suspend the assault,
Till to these terms, of which we will not bate
The smallest part, your senate may have time
To send their latest answer. Then we cut
All further treaty off. Romans, farewell.

Are what we cannot hope will e'er be granted.
They should be soften'd. Let us yield a little,
Conscious ourselves to a great nation's pride,
The pride of human nature. Could the Romans
Stoop to such peace, commanded by the sword,
They then were slaves, unworthy our alliance.

Tul. Gods ! do I hear in thee, one of the chiefs
Intrusted with the honour of the Volsci,
An advocate for Rome ?

Gal. I glory, Tullus,
To own myself an advocate for peace.
Peace is the happy natural state of man ;
War his corruption, his disgrace—

Tul. His safeguard !
His pride ! his glory !—What but war, just war,
Gave Greece her heroes ? Those who drew the sword
(As we do now) against the sons of rapine ;
To quell proud tyrants, and to free mankind.

Gal. Yes, Tullus, when to just defence the warrior
Confines his force, he is a worship'd name,
Dear to mankind, the first and best of mortals !
Yet still if this can by soft means be done,
And fair accommodation, that is better. [sands
Why should we purchase with the blood of thou-
What may be gain'd by mutual just concession ?
Why give up peace, the best of human blessings,
For the vain cruel pride of useless conquest ?

Tul. These soothing dreams of philosophic quiet
Are only fit for unfrequented shades.

The sage should quit the busy bustling world,
Ill suited to his gentle meditations,
And in some desert find that peace he loves.

Gal. Mistaken man ! Philosophy consists not
In airy schemes, or idle speculations :
The rule and conduct of all social life
Is her great province. Not in lonely cells
Obscure she lurks, but holds her heavenly light
To senates and to kings to guide their councils,
And teach them to reform and bless mankind.
All policy but hers is false and rotten ;
All valour not conducted by her precepts
Is a destroying fury sent from hell
To plague unhappy man, and ruin nations.

Tul. To stop the waste of that destroying fury
Is the great cause and purpose of this war.
Art thou a friend to peace ?—subdue the Romans.
Who, who, but they have turn'd this ancient land,
Where, from Saturnian times, harmonious concord
Still loved to dwell, into a scene of blood,
Of endless discord, and perpetual rapine ?
The sword, the vengeful sword, must drain away
This boiling blood, that thus disturbs the nations !
Talk not of terms. It is a vain attempt
To bind the ambitious and unjust by treaties :
These they elude a thousand specious ways ;
Or if they cannot find a fair pretext,
They blush not in the face of Heaven to break them.

Gal. Why then affronted Heaven will combat
Set justice on our side, and then my voice [for us.
Shall be as loud for war as thine ; my sword
Shall strike as deep, at least my blood shall flow
As freely, Tullus, in my country's cause.
But as I then would die to serve the Volscians,
So now I dare to serve them by opposing,
Even with my single voice, the impetuous torrent
That hurries us away beyond the bounds
Of temperate wisdom ; and presume to tell thee,
It is thy passion, not thy prudence, dictates
This haughty language.

Tul. Yes, it is my passion,
A passion for the glory of my country,
That scorns your narrow views of timid prudence.
Our injured honour drew our swords, and never
Shall they be sheath'd while I command the
Till Rome submits to Antium. [Volscians,

Gal. Rome will perish
Ere she submit ; and she has still her walls,
The strength of her allies, her native valour,
Which oft hath saved her in the worst extremes,
And, stronger yet than all, despair, to aid her.

Tul. All these will nought avail her, if our fears
Come not to her assistance—But, Galesus,
Why urge you this to me ? Go, talk to Marcius.
The war has given him all his pride could hope for,
To see Rome's senate humbled at his feet :
He now may wish to reign in peace at Antium,
And thou, perhaps, art come an envoy from him,
To learn if I shall prove a quiet subject.

Gal. Through this unguarded opening of thy soul,
I see what stings thee—Ah ! beware of envy !
If that pale fury seize thee, thou art lost !
Tullus, 'tis easier far, from the clear breast,
To keep out treacherous vice, than to expel it.
Farewell. Remember I have done my duty.

[Goes out.

Tul. (*alone.*) This man discerns my heart—
Well : What of that ?

Am I afraid its movements should be seen ?
I, whose clear thoughts have never shunn'd the light,
Must I now seek to hide them ? O misfortune !
To have reduced myself to such a state,
So much beneath the greatness of my soul,
That, like a coward, I must learn to practise
The wretched arts of vile dissimulation !
By Heaven, I will not do it—I will not stoop
To veil my discontent a moment longer.
But see ! my rival comes, the happy Marcius.
His haughty mien, his very looks, affront me.

SCENE III.

CORIOLANUS, TULLUS.

Cor. Tullus, I have received intelligence,
That a strong body of the Latine troops
Is in full march to raise the siege of Rome :
Another day will bring them to its aid.
But go thou forth, and lead the valiant bands,
By thee commanded, to repel these succours.
Go, and cut off from Rome its last resource.

Tul. I lead my troops from the great scene of
action,

From falling Rome, which ere to-morrow's sun
Shall set, may be our prey ! sure you forget
My rank and station—I disdain the service :
Give it to some you may command. For me,
I own no master but the Volscian states.
Rome is my object. I from Antium brought
The noblest army ever shook her walls.
And shall I now, on that decisive day,
Doom'd by the gods to lay her pride in ashes,
Shall I be absent from the glorious work ?
It is the highest outrage even to think it.—
Just gods ! dost thou presume to give thy orders
To me ? to me ! thy equal in command ?
Nay, thy superior ? was it not my hand,
My lavish hand, bestow'd thy power upon thee ?
And know, proud Roman, that the man who gave it
Can at his will resume it.

Cor. I proposed
This expedition to thee as thy friend,
Not as thy general, Tullus. We are both
Commanders here ; and for my share of power,
Whene'er the council of the Volscian states,
Who clothed me with it, shall again demand it,
I at their feet will lay it down, persuaded,
The canker'd tongue of envy's self must own,
That by my service I have well deserved it.

Tul. Was it to them, or me, you hither came
To crave protection ? Was not then your fortune,
Your liberty, your life, at my disposal ?
I raised you from the dust, a wretched exile,
An outcast, helpless, friendless, driven to beg,
The lowest refuge which despair can seek,
Shelter amidst thy foes. My pitying goodness
Protected, trusted, and believed you grateful.
Oh, ill-placed confidence !

Cor. Immortal gods !
Hear I these words from Tullus !

Tul. What for all this
Is thy return ? Pride ; self-sufficiency ;
Councils apart from mine ; despotic orders ;
The glory of the war all pilfer'd from me :
And, to complete the whole, a Latine army
Now conjured up to draw me from the siege ;
Till by cajoling our tame chiefs, and dazzling

The senseless eyes of the low mob of soldiers,
Thou shalt be solely seated in the power
Which, thank my folly! now is shared betwixt us.

Cor. Oh indignation!—Down, thou swelling heart—

I will be calm—I will.—Thou dost accuse me
Of the worst vice that can debase mankind,
Of black ingratitude. On what foundations?
What have I done to merit such a charge?
Is it my fault, if in the Volscian army
My name is as revered and great as thine?
Can I forbid authority, and fame,
To follow merit and success?—You knew
The man whom you employ'd, and should have
He would not be a cipher in employment. [known
Tul. Think'st thou my heart can better brook

than thine

To be that cipher; that dishonour'd tool!
Subservient to the ambition of another?
Gods! I had rather live a drudging peasant
Unknown to glory, in some Alpine village,
Than at the head of these victorious legions
Bear the high name of chief, without the power.
No, Marcius, no. I will command indeed:
And thou shalt learn, with all the Volscian army,
To treat their general with respect.

Cor. Respect!
O Tullus! Tullus! by the powers divine!
I bore thee once respect, as high as man
Can show to man. From thee, my foe, my rival,
I nor disdain'd nor fear'd to ask protection.
You gave me all I ask'd, you gave me more,
With noble warmth of heart! which to esteem,
Added the ties of gratitude and friendship.

Whatever since, in council or in arms,
Has been by me achieved, was done for thee.
My glory all was thine. The palms I gain'd
Only composed a garland for his brow,
Who raised this banish'd man to tread on Rome.

Tul. To tread on him who raised him—That, I know,

Is thy ambitious purpose: but be certain,
However Rome may bend beneath thy fortune,
Thou shalt not find an easy conquest here.

Cor. May Jove with lightning strike me to the
If from the day I saw thy face at Antium, [centre,
My heart has ever form'd one secret thought
To hurt thy honour, or depress thy greatness:
I was thy friend, thy soldier, and thy servant.
But now I will as openly avow,
Thy jealousy has, with envenom'd breath,
Made such a sudden ravage in our friendship,
I know not what to think—

Tul. Think me thy foe.
There is no lasting friendship with the proud.

Cor. Nor with the jealous — But of this enough.
Come let us turn our fire a nobler way:
We have a worthier quarrel to pursue.—
It were unjust, dishonourable, base,
Our pride should hurt the Volscian cause.

Tul. No, Marcius,
I mean to guard it better for the future:
The Volscian cause is safest with a Volscian.
I therefore claim, insist upon my right;
That you shall yield me my command in turn.
The first attack was yours: 'tis scanty justice,
The second should be mine.

Cor. Tullus, 'tis yours.
Oh it imports not which of us command!
Give me the lowest rank among your troops:

All Italy will know, the voice of fame
Will tell all future times, that I was present;
That Coriolanus in the Volscian army
Assisted, when imperial Rome was sack'd;
That city which, while he maintain'd her cause,
Invincible herself, made Antium tremble.

Tul. What arrogant presumption!

SCENE IV.

To them VOLUSIUS entering hastily.

Tul. Ha! Volusius,
Thy looks declare some message of importance.
Vol. Tullus, they do—I was to find thee, Marcius.
To thee a second deputation comes,
Thy mother, and thy wife, with a long train
Of all the noblest ladies Rome can boast,
In mourning habits clad, approach our camp,
Preceded by a herald, to demand
Another audience of thee.

Cor. How, Volusius!
Said you, the Roman ladies? Low, indeed,
Must be the state of Rome, when thus her matrons
She sends amidst the tumults of a camp,
To beg protection for the men, who lie [more!
Trembling behind their ramparts—come! once
And see me put an end to prayers and treaty!

SCENE V.

TULLUS, VOLUSIUS.

Vol. Tullus, 'tis well. This answers to my wishes.

Tul. How? What is well? That humbled
Rome once more
Shall deck him with the trophies of our arms?
Vol. And hopest thou nothing from this blest event?

They who have often blasted mighty heroes,
Who oft have stolen into the firmest hearts,
And melted them to folly; they, my friend,
Will do what wisdom never could effect.

Tul. Think'st thou the prayers and tears of
wailing women

Can shake the man, who with such cold disdain
Stood firm against those venerable consuls,
And spurn'd the genius of his kneeling country?

Vol. It was his pride alone that made him ours.
That passion kept him firm; the flattering charm
Of humbling those, who in their persons bore
The whole collected majesty of Rome.

These women are no proper objects for it:
He cannot triumph o'er his wife and mother.
On this my hopes are founded, that these women
May by their gentler influence subdue him.

Tul. What'er the event, he shall no longer here,
As wave his passions, dictate peace or war.
Whether his stubborn soul maintains its firmness,
Or yields to female prayers, the Volscian honour
Will be alike betray'd. If Rome prevails,
He stops our conquering arms from her destruction;
If he rejects her suit, he reigns our tyrant.
But, by the immortal gods! his short-lived empire
Shall never see yon radiant sun descend.

Vol. Blest be those gods that have at last
inspired thee

With resolution equal to thy cause,
The cause of liberty !

Tul. Be sure, Volusius,
If that should happen which thy hopes portend;
Should he, by nature tamed, disarm'd by love,
Respite the Roman doom—he seals his own :
By Heaven ! he dies.

Vol. Let me embrace thee, Tullus !
Now breaking from the cloud, which, like the
sun,
Thy own too bounteous beams had drawn around
thee.

Tul. You was deceived, my friend, when I with
tameless,
With tameness which astonish'd thy brave spirit,
Seem'd to submit to that unequal sway
He arrogated o'er me ; know, my heart
Ne'er swell'd so high as in that cruel moment.

My indignation, like the imprison'd fire
Pent in the troubled breast of glowing Ætna,
Burnt deep and silent : but, collected now,
It shall beneath its fury bury Marcius !
'Tis fix'd. Our tyrant dies.

Vol. Tullus, my sword
Here claims to be employ'd. Nor mine alone—
There are some worthy Volsci still remaining,
Who think with us, and pine beneath the laurels
A Roman chief bestows.

Tul. Go find them straight,
And bring them to the space before his tent ;
'Tis there he will receive this deputation.
Then if he sinks beneath these women's prayers—
Or if he does not—But, Volusius, wait,
I give thee strictest charge to wait my signal.
Perhaps I may find means to free the Volsci
Without his blood. If not—we will be free.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Trumpets sounding.

The scene discovers the camp, a crowd of Volscian Officers with files of Soldiers drawn up as before. Enter CORIOLANUS, TULLUS, GALESUS, VOLUSIUS. The Roman Ladies advance slowly from the depth of the stage, with VETURIA the mother of CORIOLANUS, and VOLUMNIA his wife, at their head, all clad in habits of mourning ; CORIOLANUS stands at the head of the Volsci, surrounded by his Lictors ; but when he perceives his mother and wife, after some struggle, he advances, and goes hastily to embrace them.

Cor. (advancing.) Lower your fasces, lictors—
Oh Veturia !

Thou best of parents !

Vet. Coriolanus, stop.
Whom am I to embrace ? A son, or foe ?
Say, in what light am I regarded here ?
Thy mother, or thy captive ?

Cor. Justly, madam,
You check my fondness, that by nature hurried,
Forgot I was the general of the Volsci,
And you a deputy from hostile Rome.

[He goes back to his former station.]

I hear you with respect. Speak your commission.

Vet. Think not I come a deputy from Rome :
Rome once rejected, scorns a second suit.
You have already heard whate'er the tongue
Of eloquence can plead, whate'er the wisdom
Of sacred age, the dignity of senates,
And virtue can enforce. Behold me here,
Sent by the shades of your immortal fathers,
Sent by the genius of the Marcian line,
Commission'd by my own maternal heart,
To try the soft, yet stronger powers of nature.
Thus authorised, I ask, nay claim a peace,
On equal, fair, and honourable terms,
To thee, to Rome, and to the Volscian people.
Grant it, my son. Thy mother begs it of thee !
Thy wife, the best, the kindest of her sex,
And these illustrious matrons, who have soothed
The gloomy hours thou hast been absent from us.
We, by whate'er is great and good in nature,
By every duty, by the gods, conjure thee !
To grant us peace, and turn on other foes [glory.
Thy arms, where thou mayst purchase virtuous

Cor. I should, Veturia, break those holy bonds
That hold the wide republic of mankind,
Society, together ; I should grow,
A wretch, unworthy to be call'd thy son ;
I should, with my Volumnia's fair esteem,
Forfeit her love ; these matrons would despise me—
Could I betray the Volscian cause, thus trusted,
Thus recommended to me. No, my mother,
You cannot sure, you cannot ask it of me !

Vet. And does my son so little know me ? me !
Who took such care to form his tender years,
Left to my conduct by his dying father ?
Have I so ill deserved that trust ? alas !
Am I so low in thy esteem, that thou
Should e'er imagine I could urge a part
Which in the least might stain the Marcian honour ?
No, let me perish rather ! perish all !
Life has no charms compared with spotless glory !
I only ask, thou wouldst forbid thy troops
To waste our lands, and to assault yon city,
Till time be given for mild and righteous measures.
Grant us but one year's truce : meanwhile thou
mayst,

With honour and advantage to both nations,
Between us mediate a perpetual peace.

Cor. Alas ! my mother ! that were granting all.

Vet. Canst thou refuse me such a just petition,
The first request thy mother ever made thee ?
Canst thou to her intreaties, prayers, and tears,
Prefer a savage, obstinate revenge ?
Have love and nature lost all power within thee ?

Cor. No,—in my heart they reign as strong as
ever.

Come, I conjure you, quit ungrateful Rome,
Come, and complete my happiness at Antium,
You, and my dear Volumnia—There, Veturia,
There shall you see with what respect the Volsci
Will treat the wife and mother of their general.

Vet. Treat me thyself with more respect, my son ;
Nor dare to shock my ears with such proposals.
Shall I desert my country, I who come
To plead her cause ? Ah no ! A grave in Rome
Would better please me, than a throne at Antium.
How hast thou thus forsaken all my precepts ?
How hast thou thus forgot thy love to Rome ?
Oh, Coriolanus, when with hostile arms,

With fire and sword, you enter'd on our borders,
Did not the fostering air, that breathes around us,
Allay thy guilty fury, and instil
A certain native sweetness through thy soul ?
Did not your heart thus murmur to itself :

" These walls contain whatever can command
Respect from virtue, or is dear to nature,
The monuments of piety and valour,
The sculptured forms, the trophies of my fathers,
My household gods, my mother, wife, and children ! "

Cor. Ah ! you seduce me with too tender views !
These walls contain the most corrupt of men,
A base seditious herd ; who trample order,
Distinction, justice, laws beneath their feet,
Insolent foes to worth, the foes of virtue !

Vet. Thou hast not thence a right to lift thy hand
Against the whole community, which forms
Thy ever-sacred country—That consists
Not of coeval citizens alone :

It knows no bounds : it has a retrospect
To ages past ; it looks on those to come,
And grasps of all the general worth and virtue.
Suppose, my son, that I to thee had been
A harsh obdurate parent, even unjust :

How would the monstrous thought with horror
strike thee,
Of plunging, from revenge, thy raging steel
Into her breast who nurs'd thy infant years !

Cor. Rome is no more ! that Rome which nursed
my youth :

That Rome, conducted by Patrician virtue,
She is no more ! My sword shall now chastise
These sons of pride and dirt ! Her upstart tyrants !
Who have debased the noblest state on earth
Into a sordid democratic faction.

Why will my mother join her cause to theirs ?

Vet. Forbid it, Jove ! that I should e'er distinguish

My interest from the general cause of Rome ;
Or live to see a foreign hostile arm
Reform the abuses of our land of freedom.

[*Pausing.*]

But 'tis in vain, I find, to reason more.
Is there no way to reach thy filial heart,
Once famed as much for piety as courage ?
Oft hast thou justly triumph'd, Coriolanus ;
Now yield one triumph to thy widow'd mother ;
And send me back amidst the loud acclaims,
The grateful transports of deliver'd Rome,
The happiest far, the most renown'd of women !

Cor. Why, why, Veturia, wilt thou plead in vain ?

Tul. (aside to Vol.) See, see, Volusius, how
the strong emotions

Of powerful nature shake his inmost soul !
See how they tear him.—If he long resists them,
He is a god, or something worse than man.

Vet. O Marcius, Marcius ! canst thou treat me
Canst thou complain of Rome's ingratitude, [thus ?]
Yet be to me so cruelly ungrateful ?

To me ! who anxious rear'd thy youth to glory ?

Whose only joy, these many years, has been

To boast that Coriolanus was my son ?

And dost thou then renounce me for thy mother ?

Spurn me before these chiefs, before those soldiers,

That weep thy stubborn cruelty ? Art thou

The hardest man to me in this assembly ?

Look at me ! Speak !

[*Pausing, during which he appears in great agitation.*]

Still dost thou turn away ?
Inexorable ? silent ?—Then, behold me,

Behold thy mother, at whose feet thou oft
Hast kneel'd with fondness, kneeling now at thine,
Wetting thy stern tribunal with her tears.

[*Raises her.*]

Cor. Veturia, rise. I cannot see thee thus.
It is a sight uncomely, to behold

My mother at my feet, and that to urge

A suit, relentless honour must refuse. [*retain,*]

Vol. (advancing.) Since, Coriolanus, thou dost still

In spite of all thy mother now has pleaded,

Thy dreadful purpose, ah ! how much in vain

Were it for me to join my supplications !

The voice of thy Volumnia, once so pleasing,

How shall it hope to touch the husband's heart,

When proof against the tears of such a parent ?

I dare not urge what to thy mother thou

So firmly hast denied—But I must weep

Must weep, if not thy harsh severity,

At least thy situation. O permit me

[*Taking his hand.*]

To shed my gushing tears upon thy hand !

To press it with the cordial lips of love !

And take my last farewell !

Cor.

Yet, yet, my soul !

Be firm, and persevere—

Vol.

Ah Coriolanus !

Is then this hand, this hand to be devoted,

The pledge of nuptial love, that has so long

Protected, bless'd and shelter'd us with kindness,

Now lifted up against us ? Yet I love it,

And, with submissive veneration, bow

Beneath the affliction which it heaps upon us.

But O ! what nobler transports would it give

thee !

What joy beyond expression ! couldst thou once

Surmount the furious storm of fierce revenge,

And yield ye to the charms of love and mercy.

Oh make the glorious trial !

Cor.

Mother ! wife !

Are all the powers of nature leagu'd against me ?

I cannot ! will not—Leave me, my Volumnia !

Vol. Well, I obey—How bitter thou to part !

Upon such terms to part ! perhaps for ever !

But tell me, ere I hence unroot my feet,

When to my lonely home I shall return,

What from their father, to our little slaves,

Unconscious of the shame to which you doom them,

What shall I say ?

[*Pausing : he highly agitated.*]

Nay, tell me, Coriolanus !

Cor. Tell thee ! What shall I tell thee ? See
these tears !

These tears will tell thee what exceeds the power

Of words to speak, what'er the son, the husband

And father, in one complicated pang

Can feel—But leave me ;—even in pity leave !

Cease, cease to torture me, my dear Volumnia !

You only tear my heart, but cannot shake it ;

For by the immortal gods, the dread avengers

Of broken faith !—

Vol. (kneeling.) Oh swear not, Coriolanus !

O vow not our destruction !

Vet.

Daughter, rise.

Let us no more before the Volscian people

Expose ourselves a spectacle of shame.

It is in vain we try to melt a breast,

That to the best affections nature gives us,

Prefers the worst—Hear me, proud man ! I have

A heart as stout as thine. I came not hither,

To be sent back rejected, baffled, shamed,

Hateful to Rome, because I am thy mother :

A Roman matron knows, in such extremes,
What part to take—And thus I came provided.

[Drawing from under her robe a dagger.

Go ! barbarous son ! go ! double parricide !
Rush o'er my corse to thy beloved revenge !
Tread on the bleeding breast of her, to whom
Thou owest thy life !—Lo, thy first victim !

Cor. Ha ! [Seizing her hand.
What dost thou mean ?

Vet. To die, while Rome is free,
To seize the moment ere thou art her tyrant.

Cor. O use thy power more justly ! Set not thus
My treacherous heart in arms against my reason.
Here ! here ! thy dagger will be well employ'd ;
Strike here ! and reconcile my fighting duties.

Vet. Off ! Set me free !—Think'st thou that
grasp, which binds

My feeble hand, can fetter too my will ?
No, my proud son ! Thou canst not make me live,
If Rome must fall !—No power on earth can do it !

Cor. Pity me, generous Volsci !—You are men—
Must it then be ?—Confusion !—Do I yield ?
What is it ? Is it weakness ? Is it virtue ?—

Well !—

Vet. What ? Speak !

Cor. O, no !—my stifled words refuse
A passage to the throes that wring my heart.

Vet. Nay, if thou yieldest, yield like Coriolanus ;
And what thou dost, do nobly !

Cor. (quitting her hand.) There !—'Tis done !—
Thine is the triumph, nature !

[To VETURIA, in a low tone of voice.

Ah Veturia !

Rome by thy aid is saved—but thy son lost.

Vet. He never can be lost, who saves his
country.

Cor. [Turning to the Roman Ladies.
Ye matrons, guardians of the Roman safety,
You to the senate may report this answer.
We grant the truce you ask. But on these terms :
That Rome, meantime, shall to a peace agree,
Fair, equal, just, and such as may secure
The safety, rights, and honour of the Volsci.

[To the troops.

Volsci, we raise the siege. Go, and prepare,
By the first dawn, for your return to Antium.

[As the troops retire, and CORIOLANUS turns to the
Roman Ladies.

Tul. [To VOLUSIUS aside.

'Tis as we wish'd, Volusius—to your station.
But mark me well—Till thou shalt hear my call,
I charge thee not to stir. One offer more
My honour bids me make to this proud man,
Before we strike the blow—If he rejects it,
His blood be on his head.

Vol. Well, I obey you.

[He goes out.

Cor. Be it thy care, Gaius, that a safeguard
Attend these noble matrons back to Rome.

SCENE II.

CORIANUS, TULLUS.

Cor. I plainly, Tullus, by your looks discern
You disapprove my conduct.

Tul. Caius Marcius,
I mean not to assail thee with the clamour
Of loud reproaches, and the war of words ;

But, pride apart, and all that can pervert
The light of steady reason, here to make
A candid fair proposal.

Cor. Speak. I hear thee.

Tul. I need not tell thee, that I have perform'd
My utmost promise. Thou hast been protected ;
Hast had thy amplest, most ambitious wish ;
Thy wounded pride is heal'd, thy dear revenge
Completely sated ; and to crown thy fortune,
At the same time, thy peace with Rome restored.
Thou art no more a Volscian, but a Roman.
Return, return ; thy duty calls upon thee,
Still to protect the city thou hast saved :
It still may be in danger from our arms.

Cor. Insolent man ! Is this thy fair proposal ?

Tul. Be patient—Hear me speak—I have
already

From Rome protected thee ; now from the Volsci,
From their just vengeance, I will still protect
thee.

Retire. I will take care thou mayst with safety.

Cor. With safety !—Heavens !—And think'st
thou Coriolanus

Will stoop to thee for safety ? No ! my safeguard
Is in myself, a bosom void of blame,
And the great gods, protectors of the just.—
O 'tis an act of cowardice and baseness,

To seize the very time my hands were fetter'd

By the strong chain of former obligations,
The safe sure moment to insult me—Gods !

Were I now free, as on that day I was,

When at Corioli I tamed thy pride,

This had not been.

Tul. Thou speak'st the truth : It had not.

O for that time again ! Propitious gods,
If you will bless me, grant it !—Know, for that,
For that dear purpose, I have now proposed
Thou shouldst return. I pray thee, Marcius, do it !
And we shall meet again on nobler terms.

Cor. When to the Volsci I have clear'd my faith,
Doubt not I shall find means to meet thee nobly.
We then our generous quarrel may decide
In the bright front of some embattled field,
And not in private brawls, like fierce barbarians.

Tul. Thou canst not hope acquittal from the
Volsci.

Cor. I do : nay more, expect their approbation,
Their thanks ! I will obtain them such a peace
As thou durst never ask ; a perfect union
Of their whole nation with imperial Rome
In all her privileges, all her rights.
By the just gods, I will ! What wouldst thou
more ?

Tul. What would I more ! Proud Roman ! this
I would :

Fire the cursed forest where these Roman wolves
Haunt and infest their nobler neighbours round
them ;

Extirpate from the bosom of this land,
A false perfidious people, who, beneath
The mask of freedom, are a combination
Against the liberty of human-kind,
The genuine seed of outlaws and of robbers.

Cor. Tho seed of gods ! 'Tis not for thee, vain
boaster !

'Tis not for such as thou, so often spared
By her victorious sword, to talk of Rome,
But with respect and awful veneration,
Whate'er her blots, whate'er her giddy factions,
There is more virtue in one single year

Of Roman story, than your Volscian annals
Can boast through all your creeping dark duration !

Tul. I thank thy rage. This full displays the traitor.

Cor. Ha ! traitor !

Tul. First, to thy own country, traitor ;
And traitor, now, to mine !

Cor. Ye heavenly powers !
I shall break loose—My rage—But let us part—
Lest my rash hand should do a hasty deed
My cooler thought forbids.

Tul. Begone—Return—
To head the Roman troops. I grant thee quittance
Full and complete of all those obligations
Thou hast so oft insultingly complain'd
Fetter'd thy hands. They now are free. I court
The worst thy sword can do ; whilst thou from me
Hast nothing to expect but sure destruction.
Quit then this hostile camp. Once more I tell
thee,

Thou art not here one single hour in safety.

Cor. Think'st thou to fright me hence ?

Tul. Thou wilt not, then ?
Thou wilt not take the safety which I offer ?

Cor. Till I have clear'd my honour in your
council,

And proved before them all, to thy confusion,
The falsehood of thy charge ; as soon in battle
I would before thee fly, and howl for mercy,
As quit the station they have here assign'd me.

Tul. Volusius ! Ho !

SCENE III.

To them VOLUSIUS, and Conspirators, with their swords
drawn.

Tul. Seize and secure the traitor !

Cor. [Laying his hand upon his sword.
Who dares approach me, dies !

Vol. Die thou !

[As CORIOLANUS draws his sword, VOLUSIUS
and the Conspirators rush upon and stab
him. TULLUS standing by without having
drawn his sword.

Cor. [Endeavouring to free himself.
Off !—Villains !

[Falling.
O murdering slaves ! Assassinating cowards !
[Dies.

SCENE IV.

[Upon the noise of the tumult, enter hastily to them
GALESUS, the other deputies of the Volscian States,
Officers, friends of CORIOLANUS, and TITUS with a large
band of Soldiers.

Gal.

[As he enters.

Are we a nation ruled by laws, or fury ?

How ? whence this tumult ?

[Pausing.

Gods ! what do I see ?

The noble Marcius slain !

Tul.

You see a traitor

Punish'd as he deserved, the Roman yoke

That thrall'd us broken, and the Volsci free !

Gal. Hear me, great Jove ! Hear, all you injured
powers

Of friendship, hospitality, and faith !

By that heroic blood, which from the ground,

Reeking to you for vengeance cries, I swear !

This impious breach of your eternal laws,

This daring outrage on the Volscian honour,

Shall find in me a rigorous avenger !

On the same earth, polluted by their crime,

I will not live with these unpunish'd ruffians !

Tul. This deed is mine : I claim it all !—These

These valiant men, were but my instruments, [men,

To punish him who to our face betray'd us.

We shall not fear to answer to the Volsci,

In a full council of the states at Antium,

The glorious charge of having stabb'd their traitor !

Gal. Titus, till then secure them.

[TULLUS and Conspirators are led off.

[GALESUS, standing over the body of CORIOLANUS,
after a short pause, proceeds.

Volscian fathers,

And ye, brave soldiers, see an awful scene,

Demanding serious solemn meditation.

This man was once the glory of his age,

Disinterested, just, with every virtue

Of civil life adorn'd, in arms unequal'd.

His only blot was this ; that, much provoked,

He raised his vengeful arm against his country.

And, lo ! the righteous gods have now chastised him,

Even by the hands of those for whom he fought.

Whatever private views and passions plead,

No cause can justify so black a deed :

These, when the angry tempest clouds the soul,

May darken reason, and her course control ;

But when the prospect clears, her startled eye

Must from the treacherous gulf with horror fly,

On whose wild wave, by stormy passions tost,

So many hapless wretches have been lost.

Then be this truth the star by which we steer,

Above ourselves our Country should be dear.

THE END.

LONDON :

BRADBURY AND EVANS, PRINTERS, WHITEFRIARS.

THOMSON'S SEASONS,

AND

CASTLE OF INDOLENCE.

MEMOIR.

JAMES THOMSON was born on the 11th Sept., 1700, at Ednam, near Kelso, in the county of Roxburgh, North Britain. His father was at that time minister of the parish; but some time after the poet's birth he removed to the more profitable living of Southdean. James Thomson never distinguished himself during his schooldays at Jedburgh by proficiency in any branch of study; but his poetical tendencies were very early manifested. He had, moreover, during his earliest years, the advantage of good society, being familiarly admitted, even in his boyhood, to many of the best families in the neighbourhood, which were opened to him by his father's position and character. Whilst yet a schoolboy, he delighted his friends with many poetical effusions; but with a resolution which it is to be regretted is not more frequently put in force, he made a regular practice of burning everything he had written in the previous year, at the commencement of the next. On leaving school, he was sent to Edinburgh; but was as little distinguished at college as at school. In the second session of his college course his father died, and, the family being left in any thing but affluent circumstances, it was considered necessary that James should at once fix upon a profession; and the Church was considered most advisable. His mother raised what money she could upon a small estate belonging to the family, and removed with her nine children to Edinburgh.

Thomson, submitting to the plan his friends proposed, prosecuted the study of theology, but all his hopes were overthrown by the censure he received on a college exercise, the explanation of a Psalm. The language he made use of on this occasion was so poetical, that the professor of divinity, Dr. Hamilton, rebuked him for using terms unintelligible to a popular audience. This gave him a disgust at the profession; and being encouraged in his designs by the celebrated Lady Grizel Baillie, a friend of his mother's, he determined to try his fortune in London. Thither he proceeded, carrying with him his poem of "Winter," in detached sketches, which on his arrival he showed to his friend Mallet, at that time tutor to the children of the Duke of Montrose. Mallet advised him to combine them. He carried with him recommendations to Duncan Forbes, afterwards Lord President, and others, and received great encouragement. He, however, found a good deal of difficulty in disposing of his poem, which he at last sold for a small sum to Millar, the bookseller, in 1726. The work for some time hung on hand, but at length attracting the notice of a Mr. Whately, a man of great taste and acknowledged judgment, his delight led him to extol its excellencies. From this moment the book had a rapid sale, and the reputation which the author had acquired, introduced him into the best society of the metropolis. He became known to Pope, and was beloved for his genius and good qualities by all the splendid galaxy of great men who then adorned our country.

In 1727, "Summer" appeared, which was dedicated to the celebrated Bubb Doddington, afterwards Lord Melcombe, a man of consummate taste; and in the same year he published his poem to the memory of Sir Isaac Newton. In 1728, he produced his "Spring," dedicated to the Countess of Hertford, and in great part written at her country-seat, whither she had invited the bard. This lady was a professed patroness of poets; and, as the tale is told, expected more delight from the poet's society than from his works; and was so much mortified at the discovery of his greater liking to her lord's claret and venison than to sentimental conversation and enthusiastic day-dreams, that she never requested him to renew his visit. His magnificent poem of "Summer," was, however, no mean offering at the shrine of her hospitality. Two years elapsed before he completed the four poems by which he is so pre-eminently distinguished. In 1730, "Autumn" appeared, dedicated to Mr. Onslow; and in the same year, he produced his tragedy of "Sophonisba." This play, like all his others, was not very successful; it was not adapted to the taste of the audience, nor indeed to any theatre. He was not unskilful in his plot, but the harmony of the component parts was wanting; the action was deficient, and the want was attempted to be supplied by swelling words, which seemed but the mockery of dignity. He now obtained the appointment of travelling tutor to Mr. Talbot, son of the Chancellor; and during the time he spent on the Continent, he conceived the idea of his poem of "Liberty," which, although he considered it as his masterpiece, has not maintained that reputation. On his return, he received the sinecure post of Secretary of the Briefs, which fell at the chancellor's death; and although his successor, Lord Hardwicke, was understood to be inclined to continue it, yet, as the poet was too proud, or from some other cause disinclined, to ask for it, it was, after some delay, given to another. His dependence now was solely upon his pen; and after publishing his "Liberty," he in 1733 brought out his "Agamemnon," which, despite the efforts of Pope and other friends, did not live long. He, however, about this time, procured a pension from the prince of Wales, of 100*l.* per annum, which was for many years his main dependence; but this bounty had its disadvantages; for his connection with the prince, who was at that time at enmity with his father, caused an objection to be taken to his play of "Edward and Eleanor," which, when announced for performance in 1739, was prohibited by the lord chamberlain, on the pretence that it contained improper political allusions. In 1745, appeared his "Tancréd and Sigismunda" (the plot borrowed from Gil Blas), which, although the most successful of his dramatic pieces, is liable to the same objections as the others.

In 1746, the last poem published during his life, and in itself the most finished in style and perfect in design, "The Castle of Indolence," was given to the world; this poem, like the "Seasons," has attained a lasting and well-deserved reputation. Since the loss of the secretaryship of the briefs, Thomson's life had been perplexed with difficulties and his means had been uncertain; this, added to his habitual carelessness and indolence, had plunged him into frequent distress, from which he was relieved, and his affairs were put upon an easy footing, by the gift in this year (1746), of the post of Surveyor-General of the Leeward Islands, procured for him, by his friend Lord Lyttleton, and which, after paying his deputy, left him a clear income of 300*l.* a year. Unhappily he did not live long to enjoy his good fortune: in returning to his house in Kew Lane from the City by water, he took cold; the symptoms, though not at first alarming, were aggravated by imprudent exposure, and he died from the effects of ensuing fever on the 27th August, 1748.

His play of "Coriolanus," was produced by his executors, Sir George Lyttleton and Mr. Mitchell; and the proceeds sufficed, with the other property he left, which was but little, to pay his debts and afford some aid to his sisters, to whom he had, as far as his very limited means would allow, always shown himself affectionate and attentive.

THOMSON'S SEASONS.

SPRING.

ARGUMENT.

The subject proposed. Inscribed to the Countess of Hertford. The season is described as it affects the various parts of nature, ascending from the lower to the higher; with digressions arising from the subject. Its influence on inanimate matter, on vegetables, on brute animals, and lastly on man; concluding with a dissuasive from the wild and irregular passion of love, opposed to that of a pure and happy kind.

COME, gentle Spring, ethereal mildness, come,
And from the bosom of yon dropping cloud,
While music wakes around, veiled in a shower
Of shadowing roses, on our plains descend.

O Hertford! fitted or to shine in courts
With unaffected grace, or walk the plain
With innocence and meditation joined
In soft assemblage, listen to my song,
Which thy own season paints, when Nature all
Is blooming and benevolent, like thee.

And see where surly Winter passes off,
Far to the north, and calls his ruffian blasts:
His blasts obey, and quit the howling hill,
The shattered forest, and the ravaged vale;
While softer gales succeed, at whose kind touch,
Dissolving snows in livid torrents lost,
The mountains lift their green heads to the sky.

As yet the trembling year is unconformed,
And Winter oft at eve resumes the breeze,
Chills the pale morn, and bids his driving sleets
Deform the day delightless: so that scarce
The bittern knows his time, with bill ingulfed,
To shake the sounding marsh; or from the shore
The plovers, when to scatter o'er the heath,
And sing their wild notes to the listening waste.

At last from Aries rolls the bounteous sun,
And the bright Bull receives him. Then no more
The expansive atmosphere is cramped with cold;
But, full of life and vivifying soul, [thin,
Lifts the light clouds sublime, and spreads them
Fleecy, and white, o'er all-surrounding heaven.

Forth fly the tepid airs; and unconfin'd,
Unbinding earth, the moving softness strays.
Joyous, the impatient husbandman perceives
Relenting Nature, and his lusty steers [plough
Drives from their stalls, to where the well-used
Lies in the furrow, loosened from the frost.
There, unrefusing, to the harnessed yoke
They lend their shoulder, and begin their toil,
Cheered by the simple song and soaring lark.
Meanwhile incumbent o'er the shining share
The master leans, removes th' obstructing clay,
Winds the whole work, and sidelong lays the glebe.

While through the neighbouring fields the sower
stalks

With measured step, and, liberal, throws the grain
Into the faithful bosom of the ground,
The harrow follows harsh, and shuts the scene.

Be gracious, Heaven! for now laborious man
Has done his part. Ye fostering breezes, blow!
Ye softening dews, ye tender showers, descend!
And temper all, thou world-reviving sun,
Into the perfect year! Nor ye who live
In luxury and ease, in pomp and pride,
Think these lost themes unworthy of your ear:
Such themes as these the rural Maro sung
To wide-imperial Rome, in the full height
Of elegance and taste, by Greece refined.

In ancient times the sacred plough employed
The kings and awful fathers of mankind:
And some, with whom compared your insect-tribes
Are but the beings of a summer's day,
Have held the scale of empire, ruled the storm
Of mighty war; then, with unwearied hand,
Disdaining little delicacies, seized
The plough, and greatly independent lived.

Ye generous Britons, venerate the plough!
And o'er your hills, and long withdrawing vales,
Let Autumn spread his treasures to the sun,
Luxuriant and unbounded. As the sea,
Far through his azure turbulent domain,
Your empire owns, and from a thousand shores
Wafts all the pomp of life into your ports,
So with superior boon may your rich soil,
Exuberant, Nature's better blessings pour
O'er every land, the naked nations clothe,
And be th' exhaustless granary of a world!

Nor only through the lenient air this change,
Delicious, breathes; the penetrative sun,
His force deep-darting to the dark retreat
Of vegetation, sets the steaming Power
At large, to wander o'er the verdant earth,
In various hues; but chiefly thee, gay green!
Thou smiling Nature's universal robe!
United light and shade! where the sight dwells
With growing strength, and ever-new delight.

From the moist meadow to the withered hill,
Led by the breeze, the vivid verdure runs,
And swells, and deepens, to the cherish'd eye.
The hawthorn whitens; and the juicy groves
Put forth their buds, unfolding by degrees,
Till the whole leafy forest stands displayed
In full luxuriance to the sighing gales;
Where the deer rustle through the twining brake,
And the birds sing concealed. At once arrayed
In all the colours of the flushing year,
By Nature's swift and secret-working hand,
The garden glows, and fills the liberal air
With lavish fragrance; while the promised fruit
Lies yet a little embryo unperceived
Within its crimson folds. Now from the town

Buried in smoke, and sleep, and noisome damps,
 Oft let me wander o'er the dewy fields, [drops
 Where freshness breathes, and dash the trembling
 From the bent bush, as through the verdant maze
 Of sweetbriar hedges I pursue my walk ;
 Or taste the smell of dairy ; or ascend
 Some eminence, Augusta, in thy plains,
 And see the country, far diffused around,
 One boundless blush, one white-empurpled shower
 Of mingled blossoms ; where the raptured eye
 Hurries from joy to joy, and, hid beneath
 The fair profusion, yellow Autumn spies.

If, brushed from Russian wilds, a cutting gale
 Rise not, and scatter from his humid wings
 The clammy mildew ; or, dry-blowing, breathe
 Untimely frost ; before whose baleful blast
 The full-blown Spring through all her foliage
 Joyless and dead, a wide-dejected waste. [shrinks,
 For oft, engendered by the hazy north,
 Myriads on myriads, insect armies warp
 Keen in the poisoned breeze ; and wasteful eat,
 Through buds and bark, into the blackened core,
 Their eager way. A feeble race ! yet oft
 The sacred sons of Vengeance, on whose course
 Corrosive Famine waits, and kills the year.
 To check this plague, the skilful farmer chaff
 And blazing straw before his orchard burns ;
 Till, all involved in smoke, the latent foe
 From every cranny suffocated falls :
 Or scatters o'er the blooms the pungent dust
 Of pepper, fatal to the frosty tribe :
 Or, when the envenomed leaf begins to curl,
 With sprinkled water drowns them in their nest ;
 Nor, while they pick them up with busy bill,
 The little trooping birds unwisely scares.

Be patient, swains ; these cruel-seeming winds
 Blow not in vain. Far hence they keep repressed
 Those deepening clouds on clouds, surcharged with
 That o'er the vast Atlantic hither borne, [rain,
 In endless train, would quench the summer-blaze,
 And, cheerless, drown the crude unripened year.

The north-east spends his rage ; he now shut up
 Within his iron cave, the effusive south
 Warms the wide air, and o'er the void of heaven
 Breathes the big clouds with vernal showers distent.
 At first a dusky wreath they seem to rise,
 Scarce staining ether ; but by swift degrees,
 In heaps on heaps, the doubling vapour sails
 Along the loaded sky, and mingling deep
 Sits on the horizon round a settled gloom :
 Not such as wintry storms on mortals shed,
 Oppressing life ; but lovely, gentle, kind,
 And full of every hope and every joy,
 The wish of Nature. Gradual sinks the breeze
 Into a perfect calm, that not a breath
 Is heard to quiver through the closing woods,
 Or rustling turn the many-twinkling leaves
 Of aspen tall. Th' uncurling floods, diffused
 In glassy breadth, seem through delusive lapse
 Forgetful of their course. 'Tis silence all
 And pleasing expectation. Herds and flocks
 Drop the dry sprig, and, mute-imploing, eye
 The falling verdure. Hushed in short suspense,
 The plummy people streak their wings with oil*.

* At the present day, it is almost unnecessary to state that the poet was mistaken, and that modern naturalists have satisfactorily disproved the power of any, even aquatic birds, to oil their plumage ; their dressing and pruning consists simply in arranging their disordered feathers.—Ed.

To throw the lucid moisture trickling off,
 And wait th' approaching sign to strike, at once,
 Into the general choir. E'en mountains, vales,
 And forests seem, impatient, to demand
 The promised sweetness. Man superior walks
 Amid the glad creation, musing praise,
 And looking lively gratitude. At last
 The clouds consign their treasures to the fields ;
 And, softly shaking on the dimpled pool
 Prelusive drops, let all their moisture flow,
 In large effusion, o'er the freshened world.
 The stealing shower is scarce to patter heard
 By such as wander through the forest walks,
 Beneath th' umbrageous multitude of leaves.
 But who can hold the shade, while Heaven descends
 In universal bounty, shedding herbs,
 And fruits, and flowers, on Nature's ample lap ?
 Swift Fancy fired anticipates their growth ;
 And, while the milky nutriment distils,
 Beholds the kindling country colour round.

Thus all day long the full-distended clouds
 Indulge their genial stores, and well-showered earth
 Is deep enriched with vegetable life ;
 Till, in the western sky, the downward sun
 Looks out, effulgent, from amid the flush
 Of broken clouds, gay-shifting to his beam.
 The rapid radiance, instantaneous, strikes
 Th' illumined mountain, through the forest streams,
 Shakes on the floods, and in a yellow mist,
 Far smoking o'er th' interminable plain,
 In twinkling myriads lights the dewy gems.
 Moist, bright, and green, the landscape laughs
 around.

Full swell the woods ; their every music wakes,
 Mixed in wild concert with the warbling brooks
 Increased, the distant bleatings of the hills,
 And hollow lows responsive from the vales,
 Whence blending all the sweetened zephyr springs.
 Meantime, refracted from yon eastern cloud,
 Bestriding earth, the grand ethereal bow
 Shoots up immense ; and every hue unfolds
 In fair proportion, running from the red
 To where the violet fades into the sky.
 Here, awful Newton, the dissolving clouds
 Form, fronting on the sun, thy showery prism :
 And to the sage-instructed eye unfold
 The various twine of light, by thee disclosed
 From the white mingling maze. Not so the boy ;
 He wondering views the bright enchantment bend,
 Delightful, o'er the radiant fields, and runs
 To catch the falling glory ; but amazed
 Beholds th' amusive arch before him fly,
 Then vanish quite away. Still night succeeds,
 A softened shade, and saturated earth
 Awaits the morning beam, to give to light,
 Raised through ten thousand different plastic tubes,
 The balmy treasures of the former day.

Then spring the living herbs, profusely wild,
 O'er all the deep-green earth, beyond the power
 Of botanist to number up their tribes ;
 Whether he steals along the lonely dale,
 In silent search ; or through the forest, rank
 With what the dull incurious weeds account,
 Bursts his blind way ; or climbs the mountain rock,
 Fired by the nodding verdure of its brow.
 With such a liberal hand has Nature flung
 Their seeds abroad, blown them about in winds,
 Innumerable mixed them with the nursing mould,
 The moistening current, and prolific rain.

But who their virtues can declare ? who pierce,

With vision pure, into these secret stores
Of health, and life, and joy? the food of man,
While yet he lived in innocence, and told,
A length of golden years; unfleshed in blood,
A stranger to the savage arts of life,
Death, rapine, carnage, surfeit, and disease;
The lord, and not the tyrant, of the world.

The first fresh dawn then waked the gladdened
Of uncorrupted man, nor blushed to see [race
The sluggish sleep beneath its sacred beam;
For their light slumbers gently fumed away,
And up they rose as vigorous as the sun,
Or to the culture of the willing glebe,
Or to the cheerful tendance of the flock. [sport,
Meantime the song went round; and dance and
Wisdom and friendly talk, successive, stole
Their hours away; while in the rosy vale
Love breathed his infant sighs, from anguish free,
And full replete with bliss; save the sweet pain
That, inly thrilling, but exalts it more.
Nor yet injurious act, nor surly deed,
Was known among those happy sons of Heaven;
For reason and benevolence were law.
Harmonious Nature too looked smiling on:
Clear shone the skies, cooled with eternal gales,
And balmy spirit all. The youthful sun
Shot his best rays, and still the gracious clouds
Dropped fatness down; as o'er the swelling mead
The herds and flocks, commixing, played secure.
This when, emergent from the gloomy wood,
The glaring lion saw, his horrid heart
Was meekened, and he joined his sullen joy;
For music held the whole in perfect peace:
Soft sighed the flute; the tender voice was heard,
Warbling the varied heart; the woodlands round
Applied their choir; and winds and waters flowed
In consonance. Such were those prime of days.

But now those white unblemished manners,
The fabling poets took their golden age, [whence
Are found no more amid these iron times,
These dregs of life! now the distempered mind
Has lost that concord of harmonious powers
Which forms the soul of happiness; and all
Is off the poise within: the passions all
Have burst their bounds; and Reason half extinct,
Or impotent, or else approving, sees
The foul disorder. Senseless, and deformed,
Convulsive Anger storms at large; or pale,
And silent, settles into fell Revenge.
Base Envy withers at another's joy,
And hates that excellence it cannot reach.
Desponding Fear, of feeble fancies full,
Weak and unmanly, loosens every power.
E'en Love itself is bitterness of soul,
A pensive anguish pining at the heart;
Or, sunk to sordid interest, feels no more
That noble wish, that never-cloyed desire,
Which, selfish joy disdaining, seeks alone
To bless the dearer object of its flame.
Hope sickens with extravagance; and Grief,
Of life impatient, into madness swells,
Or in dead silence wastes the weeping hours.

These, and a thousand mixed emotions more,
From ever-changing views of good and ill,
Formed infinitely various, vex the mind
With endless storm: whence, deeply rankling, grows
The partial thought, a listless unconcern,
Cold, and averting from our neighbour's good;
Then dark Disgust, and Hatred, winding wiles,
Coward Deceit, and ruffian Violence:

At last, extinct each social feeling, fell
And joyless Inhumanity pervades
And petrifies the heart. Nature disturbed
Is deemed, vindictive, to have changed her course.

Hence, in old dusky time, a deluge came:
When the deep-cleft disparting orb, that arched
The central waters round, impetuous rushed,
With universal burst, into the gulf,
And o'er the high-piled hills of fractured earth
Wide dashed the waves, in undulation vast:
Till, from the centre to the streaming clouds,
A shoreless ocean tumbled round the globe.

The seasons since have, with severer sway,
Oppressed a broken world: the Winter keen
Shook forth his waste of snows; and Summer shot
His pestilential heats. Great Spring, before,
Greened all the year; and fruits and blossoms
blushed,

In social sweetness, on the self-same bough.
Pure was the temperate air; an even calm,
Perpetual, reigned, save what the zephyrs bland
Breathed o'er the blue expanse: for then nor
storms

Were taught to blow, nor hurricanes to rage;
Sound slept the waters; no sulphureous glooms
Swelled in the sky, and sent the lightning forth;
While sickly damps and cold autumnal fogs
Hung not, relaxing, on the springs of life.
But now, of turbid elements the sport,
From clear to cloudy tossed, from hot to cold,
And dry to moist, with inward-eating change,
Our drooping days are dwindled down to nought,
Their period finished ere 'tis well begun.

And yet the wholesome herb neglected dies;
Though with the pure exhilarating soul
Of nutriment and health, and vital powers,
Beyond the search of art, 'tis copious blest.
For, with hot ravine fired, ensanguined man
Is now become the lion of the plain,
And worse. The wolf, who from the nightly fold
Fierce drags the bleating prey, ne'er drunk her
milk,

Nor wore her warming fleece; nor has the steer,
At whose strong chest the deadly tiger hangs,
E'er plough'd for him. They too are tempered high,
With hunger stung and wild necessity,
Nor lodges pity in their shaggy breast.
But man, whom Nature formed of milder clay,
With every kind emotion in his heart,
And taught alone to weep; while from her lap
She pours ten thousand delicacies, herbs,
And fruits, as numerous as the drops of rain,
Or beams that gave them birth: shall he, fair form!
Who wears sweet smiles, and looks erect on
heaven,

E'er stoop to mingle with the prowling herd,
And dip his tongue in gore? The beast of prey,
Blood-stained, deserves to bleed: but you, ye flocks,
What have you done? ye peaceful people, what,
To merit death? you, who have given us milk
In luscious streams, and lent us your own coat
Against the Winter's cold? and the plain ox,
That harmless, honest, guileless animal,
In what has he offended? he, whose toil,
Patient and ever ready, clothes the land
With all the pomp of harvest; shall he bleed,
And struggling groan beneath the cruel hands
E'en of the clown he feeds? and that, perhaps,
To swell the riot of the autumnal feast,
Won by his labour? Thus the feeling heart

Would tenderly suggest : but 'tis enough,
In this late age, adventurous, to have touched
Light on the numbers of the Samian sage.
High Heaven forbids the bold presumptuous strain,
Whose wisest will has fixed us in a state
That must not yet to pure perfection rise.

Now when the first foul torrent of the brooks,
Swelled with the vernal rains, is ebb'd away ;
And, whitening, down their mossy-tinctured stream
Descends the billowy foam : now is the time,
While yet the dark-brown water aids the guile,
To tempt the trout. The well-dissembled fly,
The rod fine-tapering with elastic spring,
Snatched from the hoary steed the floating line,
And all thy slender watery stores prepare.
But let not on thy hook the tortured worm,
Convulsive, twist in agonizing folds ;
Which, by rapacious hunger swallowed deep,
Gives, as you tear it from the bleeding breast
Of the weak, helpless, uncomplaining wretch,
Harsh pain and horror to the tender hand.

When with his lively ray the potent sun
Has pierced the streams, and roused the finny race,
Then, issuing cheerful, to thy sport repair ;
Chief should the western breezes curling play,
And light o'er ether bear the shadowy clouds,
High to their fount, this day, amid the hills, [brooks ;
And woodlands, warbling round, trace up the
The next, pursue their rocky-channelled maze,
Down to the river, in whose ample wave
Their little naiads love to sport at large.
Just in the dubious point, where with the pool
Is mixed the trembling stream, or where it boils
Around the stone, or from the hollowed bank
Reverted plays in undulating flow,
There throw, nice-judging, the delusive fly ;
And, as you lead it round in artful curve,
With eye attentive mark the springing game.
Straight as above the surface of the flood
They wanton rise, or urged by hunger leap,
Then fix, with gentle twitch, the barbed hook :
Some lightly tossing to the grassy bank,
And to the shelving shore slow-dragging some,
With various hand proportioned to their force.
If yet too young, and easily deceived,
A worthless prey scarce bends your pliant rod,
Him, piteous of his youth and the short space
He has enjoyed the vital light of heaven,
Soft disengage, and back into the stream
The speckled captive throw. But should you lure
From his dark haunt, beneath the tangled roots
Of pendent trees, the monarch of the brook,
Behoves you then to ply your finest art.
Long time he, following cautious, scans the fly ;
And oft attempts to seize it, but as oft
The dimpled water speaks his jealous fear.
At last, while haply o'er the shaded sun
Passes a cloud, he, desperate, takes the death,
With sullen plunge. At once he darts along,
Deep struck, and runs out all the lengthened line ;
Then seeks the farthest ooze, the sheltering weed,
The caverned bank, his old secure abode ;
And flies aloft, and flounces round the pool,
Indignant of the guile. With yielding hand,
That feels him still, yet to his furious course
Gives way, you, now retiring, following now,
Across the stream, exhaust his idle rage ;
Till floating broad upon his breathless side,
And to his fate abandoned, to the shore
You gaily drag your unresisting prize.

Thus pass the temperate hours ; but when the sun
Shakes from his noon-day throne the scattering
clouds,

E'en shooting listless languor through the deeps,
Then seek the bank where flowering elders crowd,
Where scattered wild the lily of the vale
Its balmy essence breathes, where cowslips hang
The dewy head, where purple violets lurk,
With all the lowly children of the shade :
Or lie reclined beneath yon spreading ash,
Hung o'er the steep : whence, borne on liquid wing,
The sounding culver shoots : or where the hawk,
High, in the beetling cliff, his eyry builds.
There let the classic page thy fancy lead
Through rural scenes, such as the Mantuan swain
Paints in the matchless harmony of song ;
Or catch thyself the landscape, gliding swift
Athwart imagination's vivid eye ;
Or by the vocal woods and waters lulled,
And lost in lonely musing, in the dream,
Confused, of careless solitude, where mix
Ten thousand wandering images of things,
Soothe every gust of passion into peace ;
All but the swellings of the softened heart,
That waken, not disturb, the tranquil mind.

Behold yon breathing prospect bids the Muse
Throw all her beauty forth. But who can paint
Like Nature ? Can imagination boast,
Amidst its gay creation, hues like hers ?
Or can it mix them with that matchless skill,
And lose them in each other, as appears
In every bud that blows ? If fancy then
Unequal fails beneath the pleasing task,
Ah, what shall language do ? ah, where find words
Tinged with so many colours, and whose power,
To life approaching, may perfume my lays
With that fine oil, those aromatic gales,
That inexhaustive flow continual round ?

Yet, though unsuccessful, will the toil delight.
Come then, ye virgins and ye youths, whose hearts
Have felt the raptures of refining love ;
And thou, Amanda, come, pride of my song !
Formed by the Graces, loveliness itself !
Come with those downcast eyes, sedate and sweet,
Those looks demure, that deeply pierce the soul,
Where, with the light of thoughtful reason mixed,
Shines lively fancy and the feeling heart :
Oh come ! and while the rosy-footed May
Steals blushing on, together let us tread
The morning dews, and gather in their prime
Fresh blooming flowers, to grace thy braided hair,
And thy loved bosom that improves their sweets.

See, where the winding vale its lavish stores,
Irriguous spreads. See, how the lily drinks
The latent rill, scarce oozing through the grass,
Of growth luxuriant ; or the humid bank,
In fair profusion, decks. Long let us walk,
Where the breeze blows from yon extended field
Of blossomed beans. Arabia cannot boast
A fuller gale of joy, than, liberal, thence
Breathes through the sense, and takes the ravished
Nor is the mead unworthy of thy foot, [soul.
Full of fresh verdure, and unnumbered flowers,
The negligence of Nature, wide, and wild ;
Where, undisguised by mimic Art, she spreads
Unbounded beauty to the roving eye.
Here their delicious task the fervent bees,
In swarming millions, tend : around, athwart,
Through the soft air, the busy nations fly,
Cling to the bud, and, with inserted tube,

Suck its pure essence, its ethereal soul ;
And oft, with bolder wing, they soaring dare
The purple heath, or where the wild thyme grows,
And, yellow, load them with the luscious spoil.

At length the finished garden to the view
Its vistas opens, and its alleys green.
Snatched through the verdant maze the hurried eye
Distracted wanders ; now the bowery walk
Of covert close, where scarce a speck of day,
Falls on the lengthened gloom, protracted sweeps ;
Now meets the bending sky ; the river now
Dimpling along, the breezy-ruffled lake,
The forest darkening round, the glittering spire,
The ethereal mountain, and the distant main,
But why so far excursive ? when at hand,
Along these blushing borders, bright with dew,
And in yon mingled wilderness of flowers,
Fair-handed Spring unbosoms every grace,
Throws out the snow-drop and the crocus first ;
The daisy, primrose, violet darkly blue,
And polyanthus of unnumbered dyes :
The yellow wall-flower, stained with iron brown ;
And lavish stock that scents the garden round :
From the soft wing of vernal breezes shed,
Anemones : auriculas, enriched
With shining meal o'er all their velvet leaves ;
And full ranunculus, of glowing red.

Then comes the tulip-race, where Beauty plays,
Her idle freaks ; from family diffused
To family, as flies the father-dust,
The varied colours run : and, while they break
On the charmed eye, the exulting florist marks,
With secret pride, the wonders of his hand.
No gradual bloom is wanting ; from the bud,
First-born of Spring, to Summer's musky tribes :
Nor hyacinths, of purest virgin white,
Low bent, and blushing inward ; nor jonquils,
Of potent fragrance ; nor Narcissus fair,
As o'er the fabled fountain hanging still ;
Nor broad carnations, nor gay-spotted pinks ;
Nor, showered from every bush, the damask-rose.
Infinite numbers, delicacies, smells,
With hues on hues expression cannot paint,
The breath of Nature, and her endless bloom.

Hail, Source of Being ! Universal Soul
Of heaven and earth ! Essential Presence, hail !
To Thee I bend the knee : to Thee my thoughts,
Continual, climb ; who, with a master-hand,
Hast the great whole into perfection touched.
By Thee the various vegetative tribes,
Wrapt in a filmy net, and clad with leaves,
Draw the live ether, and imbibe the dew :
By Thee disposed into congenial soils
Stands each attractive plant, and sucks, and swells,
The juicy tide ; a twining mass of tubes.
At Thy command the vernal sun awakes
The torpid sap, detrudd to the root
By wintry winds, that now in fluent dance,
And lively fermentation, mounting, spreads
All this innumerable-coloured scene of things.

As rising from the vegetable world
My theme ascends, with equal wing ascend,
My panting Muse ! and hark, how loud the woods
Invite you forth in all your gayest trim.
Lend me your song, ye nightingales ! oh, pour
The mazy-running soul of melody
Into my varied verse ! while I deduce,
From the first note the hollow cuckoo sings,
The symphony of Spring, and touch a theme
Unknown to Fame,—the passion of the groves.

When first the soul of love is sent abroad,
Warm through the vital air, and on the heart
Harmonious seizes, the gay troops begin,
In gallant thought, to plume the painted wing,
And try again the long-forgotten strain
At first faint-warbled ; but no sooner grows
The soft infusion prevalent and wide,
Than, all alive, at once their joy o'erflows
In music unconfined. Up-springs the lark,
Shrill-voiced, and loud, the messenger of morn :
Ere yet the shadows fly, he mounted sings
Amid the dawning clouds, and from their haunts
Calls up the tuneless nations. Every copse
Deep-tangled, tree irregular, and bush
Bending with dewy moisture o'er the heads
Of the gay choristers that lodge within,
Are prodigal of harmony. The thrush
And wood-lark, o'er the kind-contending throng
Superior heard, run through the sweetest length
Of notes ; when listening Philomela deigns
To let them joy, and purposes, in thought
Elate, to make her night excel their day.
The black-bird whistles from the thorny brake ;
The mellow bullfinch answers from the grove :
Nor are the linnets, o'er the flowering furze
Poured out profusely, silent. Joined to these
Innumerable songsters, in the freshening shade
Of new-sprung leaves, their modulations mix
Mellifluous. The jay, the rook, the daw,
And each harsh pipe, discordant heard alone,
Aid the full concert : while the stock-dove breathes
A melancholy murmur through the whole.

'Tis love creates their melody, and all
This waste of music is the voice of love,
That e'en to birds, and beasts, the tender arts
Of pleasing teach. Hence the glossy kind
Try every winning way inventive love
Can dictate, and in courtship to their mates
Pour forth their little souls. First, wide around,
With distant awe, in airy rings they rove,
Endeavouring by a thousand tricks to catch
The cunning, conscious, half averted glance
Of the regardless charmer. Should she seem,
Softening, the least approbance to bestow,
Their colours burnish, and, by hope inspired,
They brisk advance ; then, on a sudden struck,
Retire disordered ; then again approach ;
In fond rotation spread the spotted wing,
And shiver every feather with desire.

Connubial leagues agreed, to the deep woods
They haste away, all as their fancy leads,
Pleasure, or food, or secret safety prompts ;
That Nature's great command may be obeyed :
Nor all the sweet sensations they perceive
Indulged in vain. Some to the holly-hedge
Nestling repair, and to the thicket some :
Some to the rude protection of the thorn
Commit their feeble offspring. The cleft tree
Offers its kind concealment to a few,
Their food its insects, and its moss their nests.
Others apart, far in the grassy dale
Or roughening waste, their humble texture weave.
But most in woodland solitudes delight,
In unfrequented glooms, or shaggy banks,
Steep, and divided by a babbling brook,
Whose murmurs soothe them all the live-long day,
When by kind duty fixed. Among the roots
Of hazel, pendent o'er the plaintive stream,
They frame the first foundation of their domes :
Dry sprigs of trees, in artful fabric laid,

And bound with clay together. Now 'tis nought
But restless hurry through the busy air,
Beat by unnumbered wings. The swallows sweep
The slimy pool, to build his hanging house
Intent. And often, from the careless back
Of herds and flocks, a thousand tugging bills
Pluck hair and wool; and oft, when unobserved,
Steal from the barn a straw: till soft and warm
Clean and complete, the habitation grows.

As thus the patient dam assiduous sits,
Not to be tempted from her tender task
Or by sharp hunger or by smooth delight,
Though the whole loosened Spring around her
Her sympathising lover takes his stand [blows,
High on th' opponent bank, and ceaseless sings
The tedious time away; or else supplies
Her place a moment, while she sudden flits
To pick the scanty meal. Th' appointed time
With pious toil fulfilled, the callow young,
Warmed and expanded into perfect life,
Their brittle bondage break, and come to light,
A helpless family, demanding food
With constant clamour. O what passions then
What melting sentiments of kindly care,
On the new parents seize! away they fly
Affectionate, and undesiring bear
The most delicious morsel to their young;
Which equally distributed, again
The search begins. Even so a gentle pair,
By fortune sunk, but formed of generous mould,
And charmed with cares beyond the vulgar breast,
In some lone cot, amid the distant woods,
Sustained alone by providential Heaven,
Oft, as they weeping eye their infant train,
Check their own appetites, and give them all.

Nor toil alone they scorn: exalting love,
By the great Father of the Spring inspired,
Gives instant courage to the fearful race,
And to the simple, art. With stealthy wing,
Should some rude foot their woody haunts molest,
Amid a neighbouring bush they silent drop,
And whirring thence, as if alarmed, deceive
Th' unfeeling schoolboy. Hence, around the head
Of wandering swain, the white-winged plover wheels
Her sounding flight, and then directly on
In long excursion skims the level lawn,
To tempt him from her nest. The wild-duck, hence,
O'er the rough moss, and o'er the trackless waste
The heath-hen flutters, pious fraud! to lead
The hot-pursuing spaniel far astray.

Be not the Muse ashamed here to bemoan
Her brothers of the grove, by tyrant man
Inhuman caught, and in a narrow cage
From liberty confined, and boundless air.
Dull are the pretty slaves, their plumage dull,
Ragged, and all its brightening lustre lost;
Nor is that sprightly wildness in their notes,
Which, clear and vigorous, warbles from the beech.
Oh then, ye friends of love and love-taught song,
Spare the soft tribes, this barbarous art forbear,
If on your bosom innocence can win,
Music engage, or piety persuade.

But let not chief the nightingale lament
Her ruined care, too delicately framed
To brook the harsh confinement of the cage.
Oft when, returning with her loaded bill,
Th' astonished mother finds a vacant nest,
By the hard hand of unrelenting clowns
Robbed, to the ground the vain provision falls;
Her pinions ruffle, and, low-drooping, scarce

Can bear the mourner to the poplar shade;
Where, all abandoned to despair, she sings
Her sorrows through the night; and, on the bough,
Sole-sitting, still at every dying fall
Takes up again her lamentable strain
Of winding woe; till, wide around, the woods
Sigh to her song, and with her wail resound.

But now the feathered youth their former bounds,
Ardent, disdain; and, weighing off their wings,
Demand the free possession of the sky:
This one glad office more, and then dissolves
Parental love at once, now needless grown:
Unlavish Wisdom never works in vain.
'Tis on some evening, sunny, grateful, mild,
When nought but balm is breathing through the
woods,

With yellow lustre bright, that the new tribes
Visit the spacious heavens, and look abroad
On Nature's common, far as they can see,
Or wing, their range and pasture. O'er the boughs
Dancing about, still at the giddy verge
Their resolution fails; their pinions still,
In loose libration stretched, to trust the void
Trembling refuse; till down before them fly
The parent guides, and chide, exhort, command,
Or push them off. The surging air receives
Its plummy burden; and their self-taught wings
Winnow the waving element. On ground
Alighted, bolder up again they lead,
Farther and farther on, the lengthening flight;
Till vanished every fear, and every power
Roused into life and action, light in air
Th' acquitted parents see their soaring race,
And once rejoicing never know them more.

High from the summit of a craggy cliff,
Hung o'er the deep, such as amazing frowns
On utmost Kilda's* shore, whose lonely race
Resign the setting sun to Indian worlds,
The royal eagle draws his vigorous young,
Strong-pounced, and ardent with paternal fire.
Now fit to raise a kingdom of their own,
He drives them from his fort, the towering seat,
For ages, of his empire; which, in peace,
Unstained, he holds, while many a league to sea
He wings his course, and preys in distant isles.

Should I my steps turn to the rural seat,
Whose lofty elms, and venerable oaks,
Invite the rook, who high amid the boughs,
In early Spring, his airy city builds,
And ceaseless caws amusive; there, well-pleased,
I might the various polity survey
Of the mixed household kind. The careful hen
Calls all her chirping family around,
Fed and defended by the fearless cock,
Whose breast with ardour flames, as on he walks,
Graceful, and crows defiance. In the pond
The finely-checked duck before her train
Rows garrulous. The stately-sailing swan
Gives out his snowy plumage to the gale;
And, arching proud his neck, with oary feet
Bears forward fierce, and guards his osier-isle,
Protective of his young. The turkey high,
Loud threat'ning, reddens; while the peacock
His every-coloured glory to the sun, [spreads
And swims in radiant majesty along.
O'er the whole homely scene, the cooing dove
Flies thick in amorous chase, and wanton rolls
The glancing eye, and turns the changeable neck.
While thus the gentle tenants of the shade

* The furthest of the Western Islands of Scotland.

Indulge their purer loves, the rougher world
Of brutes, below, rush furious into flame,
And fierce desire. Through all his lusty veins
The bull, deep-scorched, the raging passion feels.
Of pasture sick, and negligent of food,
Scarce seen, he wades among the yellow broom,
While o'er his ample sides the rambling spray
Luxuriant shoot ; or through the mazy wood
Dejected wanders, nor th' enticing bud
Crops, though it presses on his careless sense.
And oft, in jealous madd'ning fancy rapt,
He seeks the fight and, idly butting, feigns
His rival gored in every knotty trunk.
Him should he meet, the bellowing war begins :
Their eyes flash fury ; to the hollowed earth,
Whence the sand flies, they mutter bloody deeds,
And, groaning deep, th' impetuous battle mix :
While the fair heifer, balmy-breathing, near,
Stands kindling up their rage. The trembling steed,
With his hot impulse seized in every nerve,
Nor heeds the rein, nor hears the sounding thong :
Blows are not felt ; but tossing high his head,
And by the well known joy to distant plains
Attracted strong, all wide he bursts away ;
O'er rocks, and woods, and craggy mountains flies,
And, neighing, on the aerial summit takes
Th' exciting gale ; then, steep-descending, cleaves
The headlong torrents foaming down the hills,
E'en where the madness of the straitened stream
Turns in black eddies round : such is the force
With which his frantic heart and sinews swell.

Nor undelighted by the boundless Spring
Are the broad monsters of the foaming deep :
From the deep ooze and gelid cavern roused,
They flounce and tumble in unwieldy joy.
Dire were the strain, and dissonant, to sing
The cruel raptures of the savage kind ;
How, by this flame their native wrath sublimed,
They roam, amid the fury of their heart,
The far-resounding waste in fiercer bands,
And growl their horrid loves. But this the theme
I sing, enraptured, to the British Fair,
Forbids, and leads me to the mountain brow,
Where sits the shepherd on the grassy turf,
Inhaling, healthful, the descending sun.
Around him feeds his many-bleating flock,
Of various cadence ; and his sportive lambs,
This way and that convolved, in friskful glee,
Their frolics play. And now the sprightly race
Invites them forth ; when swift, the signal given,
They start away, and sweep the massy mound
That runs around the hill ; the rampart once
Of iron war, in ancient barbarous times,
When disunited Britain ever bled,
Lost in eternal broil : ere yet she grew
To this deep-laid indissoluble state,
Where Wealth and Commerce lift their golden
And o'er our labours Liberty and Law, [heads ;
Impartial, watch ; the wonder of a world !

What is this mighty breath, ye sages, say,
That, in a powerful language, felt, not heard,
Instructs the fowls of heaven, and through their
breast

These arts of love diffuses ? What, but God ?
Inspiring God ! who boundless Spirit all,
And unremitting Energy, pervades,
Adjusts, sustains, and agitates the whole.
He ceaseless works alone ; and yet alone
Seems not to work : with such perfection framed
Is this complex stupendous scheme of things.

But, though concealed, to every purer eye
Th' informing Author in his works appears :
Chief, lovely Spring, in thee, and thy soft scenes,
The smiling God is seen ; while water, earth,
And air, attest his bounty ; which exalts
The brute creation to this finer thought,
And, annual, melts their undesigning hearts
Profusely thus in tenderness and joy.

Still let my song a nobler note assume,
And sing th' infusive force of Spring on man ;
When heaven and earth, as if contending, vie
To raise his being, and serene his soul.
Can he forbear to join the general smile
Of Nature ? Can fierce passions vex his breast,
While every gale is peace, and every grove
Is melody ? Hence ! from the bounteous walks
Of flowing Spring, ye sordid sons of earth,
Hard, and unfeeling of another's woe,
Or only lavish to yourselves, away !
But come, ye generous minds, in whose wide thought,
Of all his works, creative Bounty burns
With warmest beam ; and on your open front
And liberal eye sits, from his dark retreat
Inviting modest Want. Nor, till invoked,
Can restless Goodness wait ; your active search
Leaves no cold wintry corner unexplored ;
Like silent-working Heaven, surprising oft
The lonely heart with unexpected good.
For you the roving spirit of the wind
Blows Spring abroad ; for you the teeming clouds
Descend in gladsome plenty o'er the world ;
And the sun sheds his kindest rays for you,
Ye flower of Human Race ! In these green days,
Reviving Sickness lifts her languid head ;
Life flows afresh ; and young-eyed Health exalts
The whole creation round. Contentment walks
The sunny glade, and feels an inward bliss
Spring o'er his mind, beyond the power of kings
To purchase. Pure serenity apace
Induces thought, and contemplation still.
By swift degrees the love of Nature works,
And warms the bosom ; till at last sublimed
To rapture, and enthusiastic heat,
We feel the present Deity and taste
The joy of God to see a happy world !

These are the sacred feelings of thy heart,
Thy heart informed by reason's purer ray,
O Lyttelton, the friend ! thy passions thus
And meditations vary, as at large, [stray'st ;
Courting the Muse, through Hagley Park thou
The British Tempé ! There along the dale,
With woods o'erhung, and shagged with mossy rocks,
Whence on each hand the gushing waters play,
And down the rough cascade white-dashing fall,
Or gleam in lengthened vista through the trees,
You silent steal ; or sit beneath the shade
Of solemn oaks, that tuft the swelling mounts
Thrown graceful round by Nature's careless hand,
And, pensive, listen to the various voice
Of rural peace : the herds, the flocks, the birds,
The hollow-whispering breeze, the plaint of rills,
That, purling down amid the twisted roots
Which creep around, their dewy murmurs shake
On the soothed ear. From these abstracted oft,
You wander through the philosophic world,
Where in bright train continual wonders rise
Or to the curious or the pious eye.
And oft, conducted by historic truth,
You tread the long extent of backward time ;
Planning, with warm benevolence of mind,

And honest zeal unwarp'd by party rage,
 Britannia's weal; how from the vernal gulf
 To raise her virtue, and her arts revive.
 Or, turning thence thy view, these graver thoughts
 The Muses charm: while, with sure taste refined,
 You draw th' inspiring breath of ancient song,
 Till nobly rises, emulous, thy own.

Perhaps thy loved Lucinda shares thy walk,
 With soul to thine attuned. Then Nature all
 Wears to the lover's eye a look of love;
 And all the tumult of a guilty world,
 Tossed by ungenerous passions, sinks away.
 The tender heart is animated peace,
 And as it pours its copious treasures forth
 In varied converse, softening every theme,
 You, frequent-pausing, turn, and from her eyes,
 Where meekened sense, and amiable grace,
 And lively sweetness dwell, enraptured, drink
 That nameless spirit of ethereal joy,
 Unutterable happiness! which love
 Alone bestows, and on a favoured few.

Meantime you gain the height, from whose fair brow
 The bursting prospect spreads, immense, around:
 And snatched o'er hill and dale, and wood and lawn,
 And verdant field, and darkening heath between,
 And villages embosomed soft in trees,
 And spiry towns by surging columns marked
 Of household smoke, your eye excursive roams:
 Wide-stretching from the hall, in whose kind haunt
 The Hospitable Genius lingers still,
 To where the broken landscape, by degrees,
 Ascending, roughens into rigid hills;
 O'er which the Cambrian mountains, like far clouds
 That skirt the blue horizon, dusky rise.

Flushed by the spirit of the genial year,
 Now from the virgin's cheek a fresher bloom
 Shoots, less and less, the live carnation round;
 Her lips blush deeper sweets: she breathes of
 youth;

The shining moisture swells into her eyes,
 In brighter flow; her wishing bosom heaves
 With palpitations wild; kind tumults seize
 Her veins, and all her yielding soul is love.
 From the keen gaze her lover turns away,
 Full of the dear ecstatic power, and sick
 With sighing languishment. Ah then, ye fair!
 Be greatly cautious of your sliding hearts:
 Dare not the infectious sigh: the pleading look,
 Downcast and low, in meek submission dressed,
 But full of guile. Let not the fervent tongue,
 Prompt to deceive, with adulation smooth,
 Gain on your purposed will. Nor in the bower,
 Where woodbines flaunt, and roses shed a couch,
 While Evening draws her crimson curtains round,
 Trust your soft minutes with betraying man.

And let the aspiring youth beware of love,
 Of the smooth glance beware; for 'tis too late
 When on his heart the torrent-softness pours.
 Then wisdom prostrate lies, and fading fame
 Dissolves in air away; while the fond soul,
 Wrapped in gay visions of unreal bliss,
 Still paints th' illusive form; the kindling grace;
 Th' enticing smile; the modest seeming eye,
 Beneath whose beauteous beams, belying heaven,
 Lurk searchless cunning, cruelty, and death;
 And still, false-warbling in his ciliated car,
 Her siren voice, enchanting, draws him on
 To guileful shores, and meads of fatal joy.

Even present, in the very lap of love
 Inglorious laid; while music flows around,

Perfumes, and oils, and wine, and wanton hours;
 Amid the roses fierce Repentance rears
 Her snaky crest: a quick-returning pang [still,
 Shoots through the conscious heart; where honour
 And great design, against th' oppressive load
 Of luxury, by fits, impatient heave.

But absent, what fantastic woes, aroused,
 Rage in each thought, by restless musing fed,
 Chill the warm cheek, and blast the bloom of life!
 Neglected fortune flies; and, sliding swift,
 Prone into ruin fall his scorned affairs.

'Tis nought but gloom around; the darkened sun
 Loses his light: the rosy-bosomed Spring
 To weeping fancy pines; and yon bright arch,
 Contracted, bends into a dusky vault.

All Nature fades extinct; and she alone,
 Heard, felt, and seen, possesses every thought,
 Fills every sense, and pants in every vein.
 Books are but formal dulness, tedious friends;
 And sad amid the social band he sits,
 Lonely, and unattentive. From his tongue
 Th' unfinished period falls: while, borne away
 On swelling thought, his wafted spirit flies
 To the vain bosom of his distant fair;
 And leaves the semblance of a lover, fixed
 In melancholy site, with head declined,
 And love-dejected eyes. Sudden he starts,
 Shook from his tender trance, and restless runs
 To glimmering shades, and sympathetic glooms;
 Where the dun umbrage o'er the falling stream,
 Romantic, hangs; there through the pensive dusk
 Strays, in heart-thrilling meditation lost,
 Indulging all to love: or on the bank
 Thrown, amid drooping lilies, swells the breeze
 With sighs unceasing, and the brook with tears.

Thus in soft anguish he consumes the day,
 Nor quits his deep retirement, till the Moon
 Peeps through the chambers of the fleecy east
 Enlightened by degrees, and in her train
 Leads on the gentle Hours; then forth he walks,
 Beneath the trembling languish of her beam,
 With softened soul, and woos the bird of eve
 To mingle woes with his; or, while the world
 And all the sons of Care lie hushed in sleep,
 Associates with the midnight shadows drear;
 And, sighing to the lonely taper, pours
 His idly-tortured heart into the page
 Meant for the moving messenger of love;
 Where rapture burns on rapture, every line
 With rising frenzy fired. But, if on bed
 Delirious flung, sleep from his pillow flies.
 All night he tosses, nor the balmy power
 In any posture finds; till the grey Morn
 Lifts her pale lustre on the paler wretch,
 Exanimate by love: and then perhaps
 Exhausted nature sinks awhile to rest,
 Still interrupted by distracted dreams,
 That o'er the sick imagination rise,
 And in black colours paint the mimic scene.

Oft with th' enchantress of his soul he talks;
 Sometimes in crowds distressed; or if retired
 To secret winding flower-enwoven bowers,
 Far from the dull impertinence of man,
 Just as he, credulous, his endless cares
 Begins to lose in blind oblivious love,
 Snatched from her yielded hand, he knows not how,
 Through forest huge, and long untravell'd heaths
 With desolation brown, he wanders waste,
 In night and tempest wrapped; or shrinks agliss,
 Back, from the bending precipice; or wades

The turbid stream below, and strives to reach
The farther shore ; where, succourless and sad,
She with extended arms his aid implores ;
But strives in vain : borne by th' outrageous flood
To distance down, he rides the ridgy wave,
Or whelmed beneath the boiling eddy sinks.

These are the charming agonies of love,
Whose misery delights. But through the heart
Should jealousy its venom once diffuse,
'Tis then delightful misery no more,
But agony unmix'd, incessant gall,
Corroding every thought, and blasting all
Love's paradise. Ye fairy prospects, then,
Ye beds of roses, and ye bowers of joy,
Farewell ! Ye gleamings of departed peace,
Shine out your last ! the yellow-tinging plague
Internal vision taints, and in a night
Of livid gloom imagination wraps.
Ah then ! instead of love-enlivened cheeks,
Of sunny features, and of ardent eyes
With flowing rapture bright, dark looks succeed,
Suffused and glaring with untender fire ;
A clouded aspect, and a burning cheek,
Where the whole poisoned soul, malignant, sits,
And frightens love away. Ten thousand fears
Invented wild, ten thousand frantic views
Of horrid rivals, hanging on the charms
For which he melts in fondness, eat him up
With fervent anguish and consuming rage.
In vain reproaches lend their idle aid,
Deceitful pride, and resolution frail,
Giving false peace a moment. Fancy pours,
Afresh, her beauties on his busy thought,
Her first endearments twining round the soul,
With all the witchcraft of ensnaring love.
Straight the fierce storm involves his mind anew,
Flames through the nerves, and boils along the
veins ;

While anxious doubt distracts the tortured heart :
For e'en the sad assurance of his fears
Were ease to what he feels. Thus the warm youth,
Whom love deludes into his thorny wilds,
Through flowery-tempting paths, or leads a life
Of fevered rapture, or of cruel care ;
His brightest aims extinguished all, and all
His lively moments running down to waste.

But happy they ! the happiest of their kind !
Whom gentler stars unite, and in one fate
Their hearts, their fortunes, and their beings blend.
'Tis not the coarser tie of human laws,
Unnatural oft, and foreign to the mind,
That binds their peace, but harmony itself,
Attuning all their passions into love ;
Where friendship full exerts her softest power,
Perfect esteem enlivened by desire
Ineffable, and sympathy of soul ;
Thought meeting thought, and will preventing will,
With boundless confidence : for nought but love
Can answer love, and render bliss secure.
Let him, ungenerous, who, alone intent
To bless himself, from sordid parents buys
The loathing virgin, in eternal care,
Well-merited, consume his nights and days :
Let barbarous nations, whose inhuman love
Is wild desire, fierce as the suns they feel ;
Let Eastern tyrants from the light of heaven
Seclude their bosom-slaves, meanly possessed
Of a mere lifeless violated form :
While those whom love cements in holy faith,
And equal transport, free as Nature live,

Disdaining fear. What is the world to them,
Its pomp, its pleasure, and its nonsense all,
Who in each other clasp whatever fair
High fancy forms, and lavish hearts can wish ;
Something than beauty dearer, should they look
Or on the mind, or mind-illumined face :
Truth, goodness, honour, harmony, and love,
The richest bounty of indulgent Heaven ?
Meantime a smiling offspring rises round,
And mingles both their graces. By degrees,
The human blossom blows : and every day,
Soft as it rolls along, shows some new charm,
The father's lustre, and the mother's bloom.
Then infant reason grows apace, and calls
For the kind hand of an assiduous care.
Delightful task ! to rear the tender thought,
To teach the young idea how to shoot,
To pour the fresh instruction o'er the mind,
To breathe th' enlivening spirit, and to fix
The generous purpose in the glowing breast.
Oh, speak the joy ! ye, whom the sudden tear
Surprises often, while you look around,
And nothing strikes your eye but sights of bliss,
All various Nature pressing on the heart :
An elegant sufficiency, content,
Retirement, rural quiet, friendship, books,
Ease and alternate labour, useful life,
Progressive virtue, and approving Heaven.
These are the matchless joys of virtuous love ;
And thus their moments fly. The Seasons thus,
As ceaseless round a jarring world they roll,
Still find them happy ; and consenting Spring
Sheds her own rosy garland on their heads :
Till evening comes at last, serene and mild ;
When after the long vernal day of life,
Enamoured more, as more remembrance swells
With many a proof of recollected love,
Together down they sink in social sleep ;
Together freed, their gentle spirits fly
To scenes where love and bliss immortal reign.

SUMMER.

ARGUMENT.

The subject proposed. Invocation. Address to Mr. Dodington. An introductory reflection on the motion of the heavenly bodies ; whence the succession of the seasons. As the face of nature in this season is almost uniform, the progress of the poem is a description of a summer's day. The dawn. Sun-rising. Hymn to the sun. Forenoon. Summer insects described. Haymaking. Sheep-shearing. Noon-day. A woodland retreat. Group of herds and flocks. A solemn grove ; how it affects a contemplative mind. A cataract, and rude scene. View of summer in the torrid zone. Storm of thunder and lightning. A tale. The storm over, a serene afternoon. Bathing. Hour of walking. Transition to the prospect of a rich well-cultivated country ; which introduces a panegyric on Great Britain. Sunset. Evening. Night. Summer meteors. A comet. The whole concluding with the praise of philosophy.

From brightening fields of ether fair disclosed,
Child of the Sun, refulgent Summer comes,
In pride of youth, and felt through Nature's depth :
He comes attended by the sultry Hours,
And ever-fanning breezes, on his way ;
While, from his ardent look, the turning Spring
Averts her blushful face ; and earth, and skies,
All-smiling, to his hot dominion leaves.

Hence, let me haste into the mid-wood shade,
Where scarce a sunbeam wanders through the
gloom ;

And on the dark-green grass, beside the brink
Of haunted stream, that by the roots of oak
Rolls o'er the rocky channel, lie at large,
And sing the glories of the circling year.

Come, Inspiration ! from thy hermit-seat,
By mortal seldom found ; may Fancy dare,
From thy fixed serious eye, and raptured glance
Shot on surrounding Heaven, to steal one look
Creative of the Poet, every power
Exalting to an ecstasy of soul.

And thou, my youthful Muse's early friend,
In whom the human graces all unite :
Pure light of mind, and tenderness of heart ;
Genius, and wisdom : the gay social sense,
By decency chastised ; goodness and wit,
In seldom-meeting harmony combined ;
Unblemished honour, and an active zeal
For Britain's glory, liberty, and man :
O Dodington ! attend my rural song,
Stoop to my theme, inspirit every line,
And teach me to deserve thy just applause.

With what an awful world-revolving power
Were first the unwieldy planets launched along
The illimitable void ! thus to remain,
Amid the flux of many thousand years,
That oft has swept the toiling race of men
And all their laboured monuments away,
Firm, unremitting, matchless, in their course ;
To the kind-tempered change of night and day,
And of the seasons ever stealing round,
Minutely faithful : such the All-perfect hand
That poised, impels, and rules the steady whole !

When now no more the alternate Twins are fired,
And Cancer reddens with the solar blaze,
Short is the doubtful empire of the night ;
And soon, observant of approaching day,
The meek-eyed Morn appears, mother of dews,
At first faint-gleaming in the dappled east :
Till far o'er ether spreads the widening glow ;
And, from before the lustre of her face, [step,
White break the clouds away. With quickened
Brown Night retires : young Day pours in apace,
And opens all the lawny prospect wide.
The dripping-rock, the mountain's misty top,
Swell on the sight, and brighten with the dawn.
Blue, through the dusk, the smoking currents shine ;
And from the bladed field the fearful hare
Limps, awkward ; while along the forest glade
The wild deer trip, and often turning gaze
At early passenger. Music awakes
The native voice of undissembled joy ;
And thick around the woodland hymns arise.
Roused by the cock, the soon-clad shepherd leaves
His mossy cottage, where with Peace he dwells ;
And from the crowded fold, in order, drives
His flock, to taste the verdure of the morn.

Falsely luxurious ! will not man awake ;
And, springing from the bed of sloth, enjoy
The cool, the fragrant, and the silent hour,
To meditation due and sacred song ?
For is there aught in sleep can charm the wise ?
To lie in dead oblivion, losing half
The fleeting moments of too short a life ;
Total extinction of the enlightened soul !
Or else to feverish vanity alive,
Wildered, and tossing through distempered dreams ?
Who would in such a gloomy state remain

Longer than Nature craves, when every Muse
And every blooming pleasure waits without,
To bless the wildly-devious morning-walk ?

But yonder comes the powerful King of Day,
Rejoicing in the east. The lessening cloud,
The kindling azure, and the mountain's brow
Illumed with fluid gold, his near approach
Betoken glad. Lo ! now, apparent all,
Aslant the dew-bright earth, and coloured air,
He looks in boundless majesty abroad ;
And sheds the shining day, that burnished plays
On rocks, and hills, and towers, and wandering
streams,

High-gleaming from afar. Prime cheerer, Light !
Of all material beings first, and best !
Efflux divine ! Nature's resplendent robe !
Without whose vesting beauty all were wrapt
In unessential gloom ; and thou, O Sun !
Soul of surrounding worlds ! in whom best seen
Shines out thy Maker ! may I sing of thee ?

'Tis by thy secret, strong, attractive force,
As with a chain indissoluble bound,
Thy system rolls entire : from the far bourne
Of utmost Saturn, wheeling wide his round
Of thirty years, to Mercury, whose disk
Can scarce be caught by philosophic eye,
Lost in the near effulgence of thy blaze.

Informer of the planetary train !
Without whose quickening glance their cumbrous
Were brute unlovely mass, inert and dead, [orbs
And not, as now, the green abodes of life !
How many forms of being wait on thee,
Inhaling spirit ; from the unfettered mind,
By thee sublimed, down to the daily race,
The mixing myriads of thy setting beam !

The vegetable world is also thine,
Parent of Seasons ! who the pomp precede
That waits thy throne, as through thy vast domain,
Annual, along the bright ecliptic road,
In world-rejoicing state, it moves sublime.
Meantime the expecting nations, circled gay
With all the various tribes of foodful earth,
Implore thy bounty, or send grateful up
A common hymn : while, round thy beaming car,
High seen, the Seasons lead, in sprightly dance
Harmonious knit, the rosy-fingered Hours,
The Zephyrs floating loose, the timely Rains,
Of bloom ethereal the light-footed Dews,
And softened into joy the surly Storms.
These, in successive turn, with lavish hand,
Shower every beauty, every fragrance shower,
Herbs, flowers, and fruits ; till kindling at thy touch,
From land to land is flushed the vernal year.

Nor to the surface of enlivened earth,
Graceful with hills and dales, and leafy woods,
Her liberal tresses, is thy force confined :
But, to the bowelled cavern darting deep,
The mineral kinds confess thy mighty power.
Effulgent, hence the veiny marble shines ; [War
Hence Labour draws his tools ; hence burnished
Gleams on the day ; the nobler works of Peace
Hence bless mankind, and generous Commerce
The round of nations in a golden chain. [binds

The unfruitful rock itself, impregnated by thee,
In dark retirement forms the lucid stone.
The lively diamond drinks thy purest rays,
Collected light, compact ; that, polished bright,
And all its native lustre let abroad,
Dares, as it sparkles on the fair-one's breast,
With vain ambition emulate her eyes.

At thee, the ruby lights its deepening glow,
And with a waving radiance inward flames.
From thee the sapphire, solid ether, takes
Its hue cerulean; and, of evening tint,
The purple-streaming amethyst is thine.
With thy own smile the yellow topaz burns.
Nor deeper verdure dyes the robe of Spring,
When first she gives it to the southern gale,
Than the green emerald shows. But, all combined,
Thick through the whitening opal play thy beams;
Or, flying several from its surface, form
A trembling variance of revolving hues,
As the site varies in the gazer's hand.

The very dead creation, from thy touch,
Assumes a mimic life. By thee refined,
In brighter mazes the reluctant stream
Plays o'er the mead. The precipice abrupt,
Projecting horror on the blackened flood,
Softens at thy return. The desert joys,
Wildly, through all his melancholy bounds.
Rude ruins glitter; and the briny deep,
Seen from some pointed promontory's top,
Far to the blue horizon's utmost verge,
Restless, reflects a floating gleam. But this,
And all the much-transported Muse can sing,
Are to thy beauty, dignity, and use,
Unequal far; great delegated Source
Of light, and life, and grace, and joy below!

How shall I then attempt to sing of HIM!
Who, Light himself, in uncreated light
Invested deep, dwells awfully retired
From mortal eye or angel's purer ken,
Whose single smile has, from the first of time,
Filled, overflowing, all those lamps of Heaven,
That beam for ever through the boundless sky:
But, should he hide his face, the astonished sun,
And all th' extinguished stars, would loosening reel
Wide from their spheres, and Chaos come again.

And yet was every faltering tongue of man,
ALMIGHTY FATHER! silent in thy praise,
Thy works themselves would raise a general voice,
E'en in the depth of solitary woods
By human foot untrod; proclaim thy power,
And to the choir celestial THEE resound,
The eternal cause, support, and end of all!

To me be Nature's volume broad-displayed;
And to peruse its all-instructing page,
Or, haply catching inspiration thence,
Some easy passage, raptured, to translate,
My sole delight; as through the falling glooms
Pensive I stray, or with the rising dawn
On Fancy's eagle-wing, excursive, soar.

Now, flaming up the heavens, the potent sun
Melts into limpid air the high-raised clouds,
And morning fogs, that hovered round the hills
In party-coloured bands: till wide unveiled
The face of Nature shines, from where earth seems,
Far-stretched around, to meet the bending sphere.

Half in a blush of clustering roses lost,
Dew-dropping Coolness to the shade retires;
There, on the verdant turf, or flowery bed,
By gelid founts and careless rills to muse;
While tyrant Heat, disspreading through the sky,
With rapid sway, his burning influence darts
On man, and beast, and herb, and tepid stream.

Who can unpytied see the flowery race,
Shed by the morn, their new-flushed bloom resign,
Before the parching beam? so fade the fair,
When fevers revel through their azure veins.
But one, the lofty follower of the sun,

Sad when he sets, shuts up her yellow leaves,
Drooping all night; and, when he warm returns,
Points her enamoured bosom to his ray.

Home, from his morning task, the swain retreats;
His flock before him stepping to the fold:
While the full-uddered mother lows around
The cheerful cottage, then expecting food,
The food of innocence and health! The daw,
The rook, and magpie, to the grey-grown oaks
That the calm village in their verdant arms,
Sheltering, embrace, direct their lazy flight;
Where on the mingling boughs they sit embowered,
All the hot noon, till cooler hours arise.
Faint, underneath, the household fowls convene;
And, in a corner of the buzzing shade,
The house-dog, with the vacant greyhound, lies,
Outstretched, and sleepy. In his slumbers one
Attacks the nightly thief, and one exults
O'er hill and dale; till, wakened by the wasp,
They starting snap. Nor shall the Muse disdain
To let the little-noisy summer race
Live in her lay, and flutter through her song:
Not mean though simple: to the sun allied,
From him they draw their animating fire.

Waked by his warmer ray, the reptile young
Come winged abroad; by the light air upborne,
Lighter, and full of soul. From every chink
And secret corner, where they slept away
The wintry storms; or rising from their tombs,
To higher life; by myriads, forth at once,
Swarming they pour; of all the varied hues
Their beauty-beaming parent can disclose.
Ten thousand forms, ten thousand different tribes,
People the blaze. To sunny waters some
By fatal instinct fly; where on the pool
They, sportive, wheel; or, sailing down the stream,
Are snatched immediate by the quick-eyed trout,
Or darting salmon. Through the green-wood glade
Some love to stray; there lodged, amused, and fed,
In the fresh leaf. Luxurious, others make
The meads their choice, and visit every flower,
And every latent herb: for the sweet task,
To propagate their kinds, and where to wrap,
In what soft beds, their young yet undisclosed,
Employs their tender care. Some to the house,
The fold, and dairy, hungry, bend their flight;
Sip round the pail, or taste the curdling cheese;
Often, inadvertent, from the milky stream
They meet their fate; or, weltering in the bowl,
With powerless wings around them wrapt, expire.

But chief to heedless flies the window proves
A constant death; where, gloomily retired,
The villain spider lives, cunning, and fierce,
Mixture abhorred! Amid a mangled heap
Of carcases, in eager watch he sits,
O'erlooking all his waving snares around.
Near the dire cell the dreadless wanderer oft
Passes, as oft the ruffian shows his front;
The prey at last ensnared, the dreadful darts,
With rapid glide, along the leaning line;
And, fixing in the wretch his cruel fangs,
Strikes backward, grimly pleased: the fluttering
And shriller sound declare extreme distress, [wing
And ask the helping hospitable hand.

Resounds the living surface of the ground:
Nor undelightful is the ceaseless hum,
To him who muses through the woods at noon;
Or drowsy shepherd, as he lies reclined,
With half-shut eyes, beneath the floating shade
Of willows grey, close-crowding o'er the brook.

Gradual, from these what numerous kinds
 Evading e'en the microscopic eye! [descend,
 Full Nature swarms with life; one wondrous mass
 Of animals, or atoms organized,
 Waiting the vital breath, when Parent-Heaven
 Shall bid his spirit blow. The hoary fen,
 In putrid streams, emits the living cloud
 Of pestilence. Through subterranean cells,
 Where searching sunbeams scarce can find a way,
 Earth animated heaves. The flowery leaf
 Wants not its soft inhabitants. Secure,
 Within its winding citadel, the stone
 Holds multitudes. But chief the forest-boughs,
 That dance unnumbered to the playful breeze,
 The downy orchard, and the melting pulp
 Of mellow fruit, the nameless nations feed
 Of evanescent insects. Where the pool
 Stands mantled o'er with green, invisible
 Amid the floating verdure millions stray.
 Each liquid too, whether it pierces, soothes,
 Inflames, refreshes, or exalts the taste,
 With various forms abounds. Nor is the stream
 Of purest crystal, nor the lucid air,
 Though one transparent vacancy it seems,
 Void of their unseen people. These, concealed
 By the kind art of forming Heaven, escape
 The grosser eye of man; for, if the worlds
 In worlds enclosed should on his senses burst,
 From cates ambrosial, and the nectared bowl,
 He would abhorrent turn, and in dead night,
 When silence sleeps o'er all, be stunn'd with noise.

Let no presuming impious railer tax
 Creative Wisdom, as if aught was formed
 In vain, or not for admirable ends.
 Shall little haughty Ignorance pronounce
 His works unwise, of which the smallest part
 Exceeds the narrow vision of her mind?
 As if upon a full proportioned dome,
 On swelling columns heaved, the pride of art,
 A critic-fly, whose feeble ray scarce spreads
 An inch around, with blind presumption bold,
 Should dare to tax the structure of the whole.
 And lives the man, whose universal eye
 Has swept at once th' unbounded scheme of things,
 Marked their dependence so, and firm accord,
 As with unfaltering accent to conclude
 That this availeth nought? Has any seen
 The mighty chain of beings, lessening down
 From Infinite Perfection to the brink
 Of dreary nothing, desolate abyss!
 From which astonished thought, recoiling, turns?
 Till then alone let zealous praise ascend,
 And hymns of holy wonder, to that Power
 Whose wisdom shines as lovely on our minds,
 As on our smiling eyes his servant-sun.

Thick in yon stream of light, a thousand ways,
 Upward, and downward, thwarting, and convolved,
 The quivering nations sport; till, tempest-winged,
 Fierce Winter sweeps them from the face of day.
 E'en so luxurious men, unheeding, pass
 An idle summer life in fortune's shine,
 A season's glitter! Thus they flutter on
 From toy to toy, from vanity to vice;
 Till, blown away by death, oblivion comes
 Behind, and strikes them from the book of life.

Now swarms the village o'er the jovial mead;
 The rustic youth, brown with meridian toil,
 Healthful and strong; full as the summer-rose
 Blown by prevailing suns, the ruddy maid,
 Half-naked, swelling on the sight, and all

Her kindled graces burning o'er her cheek,
 E'en stooping age is here; and infant-hands
 Trail the long rake, or, with the fragrant load
 O'ercharged, amid the kind oppression roll.
 Wide flies the tedded grain; all in a row
 Advancing broad, or wheeling round the field,
 They spread the breathing harvest to the sun,
 That throws refreshful round a rural smell:
 Or, as they rake the green-appearing ground,
 And drive the dusky wave along the mead,
 The russet hay-cock rises thick behind,
 In order gay. While heard from dale to dale,
 Waking the breeze, resounds the blended voice
 Of happy labour, love, and social glee.

Or rushing thence, in one diffusive band,
 They drive the troubled flocks, by many a dog
 Compelled, to where the mazy-running brook
 Forms a deep pool; this bank abrupt and high,
 And that fair-spreading in a pebbled shore.
 Urged to the giddy brink, much is the toil,
 The clamour much, of men, and boys, and dogs,
 Ere the soft fearful people to the flood
 Commit their woolly sides. And oft the swain,
 On some impatient seizing, hurls them in:
 Emboldened then, nor hesitating more,
 Fast, fast, they plunge amid the flashing wave,
 And, panting, labour to the farthest shore.
 Repeated this, till deep the well-washed fleece
 Has drunk the flood, and from his lively haunt
 The trout is banished by the sordid stream;
 Heavy, and dripping, to the breezy brow
 Slow move the harmless race: where, as they
 spread

Their swelling treasures to the sunny ray,
 Inly disturbed, and wondering what this wild
 Outrageous tumult means, their loud complaints
 The country fill; and, tossed from rock to rock,
 Incessant bleatings run around the hills.
 At last, of snowy white, the gathered flocks
 Are in the wattle pen, innumerable, pressed,
 Head above head: and ranged in lusty rows
 The shepherds sit, and whet the sounding shears.
 The housewife waits to roll her fleecy stores,
 With all her gay-dressed maids attending round.
 One, chief, in gracious dignity enthroned,
 Shines o'er the rest, the pastoral queen, and rays
 Her smiles, sweet-beaming, on her shepherd king;
 While the glad circle round them yield their souls
 To festive mirth, and wit that knows no gall.
 Meantime, their joyous task goes on apace:
 Some mingling stir the melted tar, and some,
 Deep on the new-shorn vagrant's heaving side,
 To stamp the master's cypher ready stand;
 Others th' unwilling wether drag along;
 And, glorying in his might, the sturdy boy
 Holds by the twisted horns th' indignant ram.
 Behold where bound, and of its robe bereft,
 By needy man, that all-depending lord,
 How meek, how patient, the mild creature lies!
 What softness in its melancholy face,
 What dumb complaining innocence appears!
 Fear not, ye gentle tribes, 'tis not the knife
 Of horrid slaughter that is o'er you waved;
 No, 'tis the tender swain's well-guided shears,
 Who having now, to pay his annual care,
 Borrowed your fleece, to you a cumbrous load,
 Will send you bounding to your hills again.

A simple scene! yet hence Britannia sees
 Her solid grandeur rise: hence she commands
 Th' exalted stores of every brighter clime,

The treasures of the Sun without his rage :
Hence, fervent all, with culture, toil, and arts,
Wide glows her land : her dreadful thunder hence
Rides o'er the waves sublime, and now, e'en now,
Impending hangs o'er Gallia's humbled coast ;
Hence rules the circling deep, and awes the world.

'Tis raging noon ; and, vertical, the sun
Darts on the head direct his forceful rays.
O'er heaven and earth, far as the ranging eye
Can sweep, a dazzling deluge reigns ; and all
From pole to pole is undistinguished blaze.
In vain the sight, dejected, to the ground
Stoops for relief ; thence hot ascending steams
And keen reflection pain. Deep to the root
Of vegetation parched, the cleaving fields
And slippery lawn an arid hue disclose,
Blast Fancy's bloom, and wither e'en the soul.
Echo no more returns the cheerful sound
Of sharpening sythe : the mower, sinking, heaps
O'er him the humid hay, with flowers perfumed ;
And scarce a chirping grasshopper is heard
Through the dumb mead. Distressful Nature pants.
The very streams look languid from afar ;
Or, through the unsheltered glade, impatient, seem
To hurl into the covert of the grove.

All-conquering Heat, oh, intermit thy wrath !
And on my throbbing temples potent thus
Beam not so fierce ! incessant still you flow,
And still another fervent flood succeeds,
Poured on the head profuse. In vain I sigh,
And restless turn, and look around for night ;
Night is far off ; and hotter hours approach.
Thrice happy he ! who on the sunless side
Of a romantic mountain, forest-crown'd,
Beneath the whole collected shade reclines :
Or in the gelid caverns, woodbine-wrought,
And fresh-bedewed with ever-spouting streams,
Sits coolly calm ; while all the world without,
Unsatisfied, and sick, tosses in noon.
Emblem instructive of the virtuous man,
Who keeps his tempered mind serene and pure,
And every passion aptly harmonized,
Amid a jarring world with vice inflamed.

Welcome, ye shades ! ye bowery thickets hail !
Ye lofty pines ! ye venerable oaks !
Ye ashes wild, resounding o'er the steep !
Delicious is your shelter to the soul,
As to the hunted hart the sallying spring,
Or stream full-flowing, that his swelling sides
Laves, as he floats along the herbage brink.
Cool, through the nerves, your pleasing comfort
glides ;

The heart beats glad ; the fresh-expanded eye
And ear resume their watch ; the sinews knit ;
And life shoots swift through all the lightened limbs.

Around the adjoining brook, that curls along
The vocal grove, now fretting o'er a rock,
Now scarcely moving through a reedy pool,
Now starting to a sudden stream, and now
Gently diffused into a limpid plain ;
A various group the herds and flocks compose,
Rural confusion ! On the grassy bank
Some ruminating lie ; while others stand
Half in the flood, and often bending sip
The circling surface. In the middle droops
The strong laborious ox, of honest front,
Which incomposed he shakes ; and from his sides
The troublous insects lashes with his tail,
Returning still. Amid his subjects safe,
Slumbers the monarch-swain ; his careless arm

Thrown round his head, on downy moss sustain'd ;
Here laid his serip, with wholesome viands filled ;
There, listening every noise, his watchful dog.
Light fly his slumbers, if perchance a flight
Of angry gad-flies fasten on the herd,
That startling scatters from the shallow brook,
In search of lavish stream. Tossing the foam,
They scorn the keeper's voice, and scour the plain,
Through all the bright severity of noon ;
While from their labouring breasts a hollow moan
Proceeding, runs low-bellowing round the hills.

Off in this season too the horse, provoked,
While his big sinews full of spirits swell,
Trembling with vigour, in the heat of blood,
Springs the high fence ; and, o'er the field effused,
Darts on the gloomy flood, with steadfast eye,
And heart estranged to fear : his nervous chest,
Luxuriant, and erect, the seat of strength !
Bears down the opposing stream ; quenchless his
thirst :

He takes the river at redoubled draughts,
And with wide nostrils, snorting, skims the wave.
Still let me pierce into the midnight depth
Of yonder grove, of wildest largest growth ;
That, forming high in air a woodland choir,
Nods o'er the mount beneath. At every step,
Solemn and slow, the shadows blacker fall,
And all is awful listening gloom around.

These are the haunts of Meditation, these
The scenes where ancient bards the inspiring breath,
Ecstatic, felt ; and, from this world retired,
Conversed with angels, and immortal forms,
On gracious errands bent ; to save the fall
Of virtue struggling on the brink of vice ;
In waking whispers, and repeated dreams,
To hint pure thought, and warn the favoured soul
For future trials fated to prepare ;
To prompt the poet, who devoted gives
His muse to better themes ; to soothe the pangs
Of dying worth, and from the patriot's breast
(Backward to mingle in detested war,
But foremost when engaged) to turn the death ;
And numberless such offices of love,
Daily, and nightly, zealous to perform.

Shook sudden from the bosom of the sky,
A thousand shapes or glide athwart the dusk,
Or stalk majestic on. Deep-roused, I feel
A sacred terror, a severe delight,
Creep through my mortal frame ; and thus, methinks,
A voice, than human more, the abstracted ear
Of Fancy strikes. " Be not of us afraid,
Poor kindred man ! thy fellow-creatures, we
From the same Parent-Power our beings drew,
The same our Lord, and laws, and great pursuit.
Once some of us, like thee, through stormy life,
Toiled, tempest-beaten, ere we could attain
This holy calm, this harmony of mind,
Where purity and peace innuigle charms.
Then fear not us ; but with responsive song,
Amid these dim recesses, undisturbed
By noisy folly and discordant vice,
Of Nature sing with us, and Nature's God.
Here frequent, at the visionary hour,
When musing midnight reigns or silent noon,
Angelic harps are in full concert heard,
And voices chanting from the wood-crowned hill,
The deepening dale, or inmost sylvan glade :
A privilege bestowed by us, alone,
On Contemplation, or the hallowed ear
Of poet, swelling to seraphic strain."

And art thou, Stanley *, of that sacred band?
 Alas, for us too soon! though raised above
 The reach of human pain, above the flight
 Of human joy; yet, with a mingled ray
 Of sadly pleased remembrance, must thou feel
 A mother's love, a mother's tender woe,
 Who seeks thee still, in many a former scene;
 Seeks thy fair form, thy lovely beaming eyes,
 Thy pleasing converse, by gay lively sense
 Inspired, where moral wisdom mildly shone
 Without the toil of art; and virtue glowed,
 In all her smiles, without forbidding pride.
 But, O thou best of parents! wipe thy tears;
 Or rather to Parental Nature pay
 The tears of grateful joy, who for a while
 Lent thee this younger self, this opening bloom
 Of thy enlightened mind and gentle worth.
 Believe the Muse: the wintry blast of death
 Kills not the buds of virtue; no, they spread,
 Beneath the heavenly beam of brighter suns,
 Through endless ages, into higher powers.

Thus up the mount, in airy vision rapt,
 I stray, regardless whither, till the sound
 Of a near fall of water every sense [back,
 Wakes from the charm of thought: swift-shrinking
 I check my steps, and view the broken scene.

Smooth to the shelving brink a copious flood
 Rolls fair and placid, where collected all,
 In one impetuous torrent, down the steep
 It thundering shoots, and shakes the country round.
 At first, an azure sheet, it rushes broad;
 Then whitening by degrees, as prone it falls,
 And, from the loud-resounding rocks below,
 Dashed in a cloud of foam, it sends aloft
 A hoary mist, and forms a ceaseless shower.
 Nor can the tortured wave here find repose;
 But, raging still amid the shaggy rocks,
 Now flashes o'er the scattered fragments, now
 Aslant the hollowed channel rapid darts;
 And falling fast from gradual slope to slope,
 With wild infracted course and lessened roar,
 It gains a safer bed, and steals, at last,
 Along the mazes of the quiet vale.

Invited from the cliff, to whose dark brow
 He clings, the steep-ascending eagle soars,
 With upward pinions through the flood of day;
 And, giving full his bosom to the blaze,
 Gains on the sun; while all the tuneful race
 Smit by afflictive noon, disordered droop,
 Deep in the thicket; or, from bower to bower
 Responsive, force an interrupted strain.
 The stock-dove only through the forest coos,
 Mournfully hoarse; oft ceasing from his plaint,
 Short interval of weary woe! again
 The sad idea of his murdered mate,
 Struck from his side by savage fowler's guile,
 Across his fancy comes; and then resounds
 A louder song of sorrow through the grove.

Beside the dewy border let me sit,
 All in the freshness of the humid air;
 There in that hollowed rock, grotesque and wild
 An ample chair moss-lined, and over head
 By flowering umbrage shaded; where the bee
 Strays diligent, and with the extracted balm
 Of fragrant woodbine loads his little thigh.

Now, while I taste the sweetness of the shade,
 While Nature lies around deep-lulled in noon,

Now come, bold Fancy, spread a daring flight,
 And view the wonders of the torrid zone:
 Climes unrelenting! with whose rage compared
 Yon blaze is feeble, and yon skies are cool.

See, how at once the bright-effulgent sun,
 Rising direct, swift chases from the sky
 The short-lived twilight, and with ardent blaze
 Looks gaily fierce through all the dazzling air:
 He mounts his throne; but kind before him sends,
 Issuing from out the portals of the morn,
 The general breeze †, to mitigate his fire
 And breathe refreshment on a fainting world.
 Great are the scenes, with dreadful beauty crowned
 And barbarous wealth, that see, each circling year,
 Returning suns and double seasons pass ‡;
 Rocks rich in gems, and mountains big with mines,
 That on the high equator ridgy rise,
 Whence many a bursting stream auriferous plays:
 Majestic woods, of every vigorous green,
 Stage above stage, high-waving o'er the hills;
 Or to the far horizon wide diffused,
 A boundless deep immensity of shade.
 Here lofty trees, to ancient song unknown,
 The noble sons of potent heat and floods
 Prone-rushing from the clouds, rear high to heaven
 Their thorny stems, and broad around them throw
 Meridian gloom. Here, in eternal prime,
 Unnumbered fruits, of keen delicious taste
 And vital spirit, drink amid the cliffs,
 And burning sands that bank the shrubby vales,
 Redoubled day, yet in their rugged coats
 A friendly juice to cool its rage contain.

Bear me, Pomona, to thy citron groves,
 To where the lemon and the piercing lime,
 With the deep orange, glowing through the green,
 Their lighter glories blend. Lay me reclined
 Beneath thy spreading tamarind, that shakes,
 Fanned by the breeze, its fever-cooling fruit.
 Deep in the night the massy locust sheds,
 Quench my hot limbs; or lead me through the
 Embowering endless, of the Indian fig; [maze,
 Or, thrown at gayer ease on some fair brow,
 Let me behold, by breezy murmurs cooled,
 Broad o'er my head the verdant cedar wave,
 And high palmetos lift their graceful shade.
 Or, stretched amid these orchards of the sun,
 Give me to drain the cocoa's milky bowl,
 And from the palm to draw its freshening wine,
 More bounteous far than all the frantic juice
 Which Bacchus pours! Nor, on its slender twigs
 Low-bending, be the full pomegranate scorned;
 Nor, creeping through the woods, the gelid race
 Of berries. Oft in humble station dwells
 Unboastful worth, above fastidious pomp.
 Witness, thou best anana, thou the pride
 Of vegetable life, beyond whate'er
 The poets imaged in the golden age:
 Quick let me strip thee of thy tufty coat,
 Spread thy ambrosial stores, and feast with Jove!

From these the prospect varies. Plains immense
 Lie stretched below, interminable meads,
 And vast savannahs, where the wandering eye,

† Which blows constantly between the tropics from the east, or the collateral points, the north-east and south-east; caused by the pressure of the rarefied air on that before it, according to the diurnal motion of the sun from east to west.

‡ In all climates between the tropics, the sun, as he passes and repasses in his annual motion, is twice a year vertical, which produces this effect.

* A young lady, well known to the author, who died at the age of eighteen, in the year 1738.

Unfixed, is in a verdant ocean lost.
 Another Flora there, of bolder hues,
 And richer sweets, beyond our garden's pride,
 Plays o'er the fields, and showers with sudden hand
 Exuberant Spring; for oft these valleys shift
 Their green-embroidered robe to fiery brown,
 And swift to green again, as scorching suns,
 Or streaming dews and torrent rains, prevail.

Along these lonely regions, where, retired
 From little scenes of art, great Nature dwells
 In awful solitude, and nought is seen
 But the wild herds that own no master's stall,
 Prodigious rivers roll their fattening seas,
 On whose luxuriant herbage, half-concealed,
 Like a fallen cedar, far-diffused his train,
 Cased in green scales, the crocodile extends.
 The flood departs: behold! in plaited mail,
 Behemoth rears his head. Glanced from his side,
 The darted steel in idle shivers flies;
 He fearless walks the plain, or seeks the hills,
 Where, as he crops his varied fare, the herds,
 In widening circle round, forget their food,
 And at the harmless stranger wondering gaze.

Peaceful, beneath primeval trees, that cast
 Their ample shade o'er Niger's yellow stream,
 And where the Ganges rolls his sacred wave;
 Or 'mid the central depth of blackening woods,
 High-raised in solemn theatre around,
 Leans the huge elephant: wisest of brutes!
 O truly wise, with gentle might endowed,
 Though powerful, not destructive! Here he sees
 Revolving ages sweep the changeful earth,
 And empires rise and fall; regardless he
 Of what the never-resting race of men
 Project: thrice-happy! could he 'scape their guile,
 Who mine, from cruel avarice, his steps;
 Or with his towey grandeur swell their state,
 The pride of kings! or else his strength pervert,
 And bid him rage amid the mortal fray,
 Astonished at the madness of mankind.

Wide o'er the winding unbrage of the floods,
 Like vivid blossoms glowing from afar,
 Thick swarm the brighter birds; for Nature's hand,
 That with a sportive vanity has decked
 The plummy nations, there her gayest hues
 Profusely pours. But, if she bids them shine,
 Arrayed in all the beauteous beams of day,
 Yet, frugal still, she humbles them in song.*
 Nor envy we the gaudy robes they lent
 Proud Montezuma's realm, whose legions cast
 A boundless radiance waving on the sun,
 While Philomel is ours; while in our shades,
 Through the soft silence of the listening night,
 The sober-suited songstress trills her lay.

But come, my Muse, the desert-barrier burst,
 A wild expanse of lifeless sand and sky,
 And, swifter than the toiling caravan,
 Shoot o'er the vale of Sennar, ardent climb
 The Nubian mountains, and the secret bounds
 Of jealous Abyssinia boldly pierce.
 Thou art no ruffian, who beneath the mask
 Of social commerce comest to rob their wealth;
 No holy fury thou, blaspheming Heaven,
 With consecrated steel to stab their peace,
 And through the land, yet red from civil wounds,
 To spread the purple tyranny of Rome.
 Thou, like the harmless bee, may'st freely range

* In all the regions of the torrid zone, the birds, though more beautiful in their plumage, are observed to be less melodious than ours.

From mead to mead bright with exalted flowers,
 From jasmine grove to grove may'st wander gay,
 Through palmy shades and aromatic woods,
 That grace the plains, invest the peopled hills,
 And up the more than Alpine mountains wave.
 There on the breezy summit, spreading fair
 For many a league; or on stupendous rocks,
 That from the sun-redoubling valley lift,
 Cool to the middle air, their lawny tops;
 Where palaces, and fanes, and villas rise;
 And gardens smile around, and cultured fields;
 And fountains gush; and careless herds and flocks
 Securely stray; a world within itself,
 Disdaining all assault: there let me draw
 Ethereal soul, there drink reviving gales,
 Profusely breathing from the spicy groves,
 And vales of fragrance; there at distance hear
 The roaring floods and cataracts, that sweep
 From disembowelled earth the virgin gold;
 And o'er the varied landscape, restless, rove,
 Fervent with life of every fairer kind:
 A land of wonders! which the sun still eyes
 With ray direct, as of the lovely realm
 Enamoured, and delighting there to dwell. [noon,

How changed the scene! In blazing height of
 The sun, oppressed, is plunged in thickest gloom.
 Still horror reigns, a dreary twilight round
 Of struggling night and day malignant mixed.
 For to the hot equator crowding fast,
 Where, highly rarefied, the yielding air
 Admits their stream, incessant vapours roll,
 Amazing clouds on clouds continual heaped;
 Or whirled tempestuous by the gusty wind,
 Or silent borne along, heavy, and slow,
 With the big stores of steaming oceans charged.
 Meantime, amid these upper seas, condensed
 Around the cold ærial mountain's brow,
 And by conflicting winds together dashed,
 The thunder holds his black tremendous throne:
 From cloud to cloud the rending lightnings rage;
 Till, in the furious elemental war
 Dissolved, the whole precipitated mass
 Unbroken floods and solid torrents pours.

The treasures these, hid from the bounded search
 Of ancient knowledge, whence, with annual pomp,
 Rich king of floods! o'erflows the swelling Nile.
 From his two springs, in Gojam's sunny realm,
 Pure-welling out, he through the lucid lake
 Of fair Dambea rolls his infant stream.
 There, by the Naiads nursed, he sports away
 His playful youth, amid the fragrant isles,
 That with unfading verdure smile around.
 Ambitious, thence the manly river breaks;
 And gathering many a flood, and copious fed
 With all the mellowed treasures of the sky,
 Winds in progressive majesty along:
 Through splendid kingdoms now devolves his maze,
 Now wanders wild o'er solitary tracts
 Of life-deserted sand; till glad to quit
 The joyless desert down the Nubian rocks,
 From thundering steep to steep, he pours his urn,
 And Egypt joys beneath the spreading wave.

His brother Niger too, and all the floods
 In which the full-formed maids of Afric lave
 Their jetty limbs; and all that from the tract
 Of woody mountains stretched thro' gorgeous Ind
 Fall on Cor'mandel's coast, or Malabar;
 From Menam's* orient stream, that nightly shines
 With insect lamps, to where Aurora sheds

* The river that runs through Siam, on whose banks a

On Indus' smiling banks the rosy shower:
All, at this bounteous season, ope their urns,
And pour untailing harvest o'er the land.

Nor less thy world, Columbus, drinks, refreshed,
The lavish moisture of the melting year.

Wide o'er his isles the branching Oronouque
Rolls a brown deluge, and the native drives
To dwell aloft on life-sufficing trees,
At once his dome, his robe, his food, and arms.
Swelled by a thousand streams, impetuous hurled
From all the roaring Andes, huge descends
The mighty Orellana. Scarce the Muse
Dares stretch her wing o'er this enormous mass
Of rushing water; scarce she dares attempt
The sea-like Plata, to whose dread expanse,
Continuous depth, and wondrous length of course,
Our floods are rills. With unabated force,
In silent dignity they sweep along,
And traverse realms unknown, and blooming wilds,
And fruitful deserts, worlds of solitude,
Where the sun smiles, and seasons teem in vain,
Unseen, and unenjoyed. Forsaking these,
O'er peopled plains they fair-diffusive flow,
And many a nation feed, and circle safe,
In their soft bosom, many a happy isle;
The seat of blameless Pan, yet undisturbed
By Christian crimes and Europe's cruel sons.
Thus pouring on they proudly seek the deep,
Whose vanquished tide, recoiling from the shock,
Yields to this liquid weight of half the globe,
And Ocean trembles for his green domain.

But what avails this wondrous waste of wealth—
This gay profusion of luxurious bliss—
This pomp of Nature? what their balmy meads,
Their powerful herbs, and Ceres void of pain?
By vagrant birds dispersed, and wafting winds,
What their unplanted fruits? what the cool
draughts,

The ambrosial food, rich gums, and spicy health,
Their forests yield? Their toiling insects what?
Their silky pride, and vegetable robes?
Ah! what avail their fatal treasures, hid
Deep in the bowels of the pitying earth,
Golconda's gems, and sad Potosi's mines,
Where dwelt the gentlest children of the sun?
What all that Afric's golden rivers roll,
Her odorous woods, and shining ivory stores?
Ill-fated race! the softening arts of Peace,
Whate'er the humanising Muses teach;
The godlike wisdom of the tempered breast;
Progressive truth, the patient force of thought;
Investigation calm, whose silent powers
Command the world; the light that leads to Heaven;
Kind equal rule, the government of laws,
And all-protecting Freedom, which alone
Sustains the name and dignity of man:—
These are not theirs. The parent sun himself
Seems o'er this world of slaves to tyrannise;
And, with oppressive ray the roseate bloom
Of beauty blasting, gives the gloomy hue,
And feature gross: or worse, to ruthless deeds,
Mad jealousy, blind rage, and fell revenge,
Their fervid spirit fires. Love dwells not there,
The soft regards, the tenderness of life,
The heart-shed tear, th' ineffable delight
Of sweet humanity: these court the beam
Of milder climes; in selfish fierce desire,
And the wild fury of voluptuous sense,

vast multitude of those insects called fire-flies make a
beautiful appearance at night.

There lost. The very brute-creation there
This rage partakes, and burns with horrid fire.

Lo! the green serpent, from his dark abode,
Which e'en Imagination fears to tread,
At noon forth-issuing, gathers up his train
In orbs immense, then, darting out anew,
Seeks the refreshing fount, by which, diffused,
He throws his folds: and while, with threatening
And deathful jaws erect, the monster curls [tongue
His flaming crest, all other thirst appalled,
Or shivering flies, or checked at distance stands,
Nor dares approach. But still more direful he,
The small close-lurking minister of fate,
Whose high-concocted venom through the veins
A rapid lightning darts, arresting swift
The vital current. Formed to humble man,
This child of vengeful Nature! there, sublimed
To fearless lust of blood, the savage race
Roam, licensed by the shading hour of guilt,
And foul misdeed, when the pure day has shut
His sacred eye. The tiger darting fierce
Impetuous on the prey his glance has doomed;
The lively-shining leopard, speckled o'er
With many a spot, the beauty of the waste;
And, scorning all the taming arts of man,
The keen hyena, fellest of the fell;
These, rushing from th' inhospitable woods
Of Mauritania, or the tufted isles
That verdant rise amid the Libyan wild,
Innumerable glare around their shaggy king,
Majestic, stalking o'er the printed sand;
And, with imperious and repeated roars,
Demand their fated food. The fearful flocks
Crowd near the guardian swain; the nobler herds,
Where round their lordly bull in rural ease,
They ruminating lie, with horror hear
The coming rage. Th' awakened village starts;
And to her fluttering breast the mother strains
Her thoughtless infant. From the pirate's den,
Or stern Morocco's tyrant fang, escaped,
The wretch half wishes for his bonds again;
While, uproar all, the wilderness resounds,
From Atlas eastward to the frightened Nile.

Unhappy he, who from the first of joys,
Society, cut off, is left alone
Amid this world of death. Day after day,
Sad on the jutting eminence he sits,
And views the main that ever toils below;
Still fondly forming in the farthest verge,
Where the round ether mixes with the wave,
Ships, dim-discovered, dropping from the clouds;
At evening to the setting sun he turns
A mournful eye, and down his dying heart
Sinks helpless; while the wonted roar is up,
And hiss continual through the tedious night.
Yet here, e'en here, into these black abodes
Of monsters, unappalled, from stooping Rome,
And guilty Cesar, Liberty retired,
Her Cato following through Numidian wilds:
Disdainful of Campania's gentle plains,
And all the green delights Ausonia pours,
When for them she must bend the servile knee,
And fawning take the splendid robber's boon.

Nor stop the terrors of these regions here.
Commissioned demons oft, angels of wrath,
Let loose the raging elements. Breathed hot
From all the boundless furnace of the sky,
And the wide glittering waste of burning sand,
A suffocating wind the pilgrim smites
With instant death. Patient of thirst and toil,

Son of the desert! e'en the camel feels,
 Shot through his withered heart, the fiery blast.
 Or from the black-red ether, bursting broad,
 Sallies the sudden whirlwind. Straight the sands,
 Commoved around, in gathering eddies play;
 Nearer and nearer still they darkening come;
 Till, with the general all-involving storm
 Swept up, the whole continuous wilds arise;
 And by their noon-day fount dejected thrown,
 Or sunk at night in sad disastrous sleep,
 Beneath descending hills the caravan
 Is buried deep. In Cairo's crowded streets
 Th' impatient merchant, wondering, waits in vain,
 And Mecca saddens at the long delay.

But chief at sea, whose every flexile wave
 Obeys the blast, the aerial tumult swells.
 In the dread ocean, undulating wide,
 Beneath the radiant line that girts the globe,
 The circling Typhon, whirled from point to point,
 Exhausting all the rage of all the sky,
 And dire Eneiphia*, reign. Amid the heavens,
 Falsely serene, deep in a cloudy speck
 Compressed, the mighty tempest brooding dwells;
 Of no regard save to the skilful eye,
 Fiery and foul, the small prognostic hangs
 Aloft, or on the promontory's brow
 Musters its force. A faint deceitful calm,
 A fluttering gale, the demon sends before,
 To tempt the spreading sail. Then down at once,
 Precipitant, descends a mingled mass
 Of roaring winds, and flame, and rushing floods.
 In wild amazement fixed the sailor stands.
 Art is too slow: by rapid fate oppressed,
 His broad-winged vessel drinks the whelming tide,
 Hid in the bosom of the black abyss.
 With such mad seas the daring Gama† fought,
 For many a day, and many a dreadful night,
 Incessant, labouring round the stormy Cape;
 By bold ambition led, and bolder thirst
 Of gold. For then from ancient gloom emerged
 The rising world of trade: the Genius, then,
 Of navigation, that, in hopeless sloth,
 Had slumbered on the vast Atlantic deep,
 For idle ages, starting, heard at last
 The Lusitanian prince‡; who, Heaven-inspired,
 To love of useful glory roused mankind,
 And in abounded commerce mixed the world.

Increasing still the terrors of these storms,
 His jaws horrific armed with threefold fate,
 Here dwells the direful shark. Lured by the scent
 Of steaming crowds, of rank disease, and death,
 Behold! he rushing cuts the briny flood,
 Swift as the gale can bear the ship along;
 And, from the partners of that cruel trade
 Which spoils unhappy Guinea of her sons,
 Demands his share of prey, demands themselves.
 The stormy fates descend: one death involves
 Tyrants and slaves; when straight, their mangled
 Crashing at once, he dyes the purple seas [limbs
 With gore, and riots in the vengeful meal.

When o'er this world, by equinoctial rains

* Typhon and Eneiphia, names of particular storms or hurricanes, known only between the tropics.

† Called by sailors the Ox-eye, being in appearance at first no bigger.

‡ Vasco de Gama, the first who sailed round Africa, by the Cape of Good Hope, to the East Indies.

§ Don Henry, third son to John the First, King of Portugal. His strong genius to the discovery of new countries was the chief source of all the modern improvements in navigation.

Flooded immense, looks out the joyless sun,
 And draws the copious stream: from swampy fens,
 Where putrefaction into life ferments,
 And breathes destructive myriads; or from woods,
 Impenetrable shades, recesses foul,
 In vapours rank and blue corruption wrapt,
 Whose gloomy horrors yet no desperate foot
 Has ever dared to pierce; then, wasteful, forth
 Walks the dire Power of pestilent disease.
 A thousand hideous fiends her course attend,
 Sick Nature blasting, and to heartless woe,
 And feeble desolation, casting down
 The towering hopes and all the pride of man.
 Such as of late, at Carthage quenched
 The British fire. You, gallant Vernon, saw
 The miserable scene; you, pitying, saw
 To infant weakness sunk the warrior's arm;
 Saw the deep-racking pang, the ghastly form,
 The lip pale-quivering, and the beamless eye
 No more with ardour bright: you heard the groans
 Of agonising ships, from shore to shore;
 Heard nightly plunged amid the sullen waves
 The frequent corse; while on each other fixed,
 In sad presage, the blank assistants seemed,
 Silent, to ask, whom Fate would next demand.

What need I mention those inclement skies,
 Where, frequent o'er the sickening city, Plague,
 The fiercest child of Nemesis divine,
 Descends? From Ethiopia's poisoned woods,
 From stifled Cairo's filth, and fetid fields
 With locust-armies putrifying heaped,
 This great destroyer sprung. Her awful rage
 The brutes escape; man is her destined prey,
 Intemperate man! and o'er his guilty domes
 She draws a close incumbent cloud of death;
 Uninterrupted by the living winds,
 Forbid to blow a wholesome breeze; and stained
 With many a mixture by the sun, suffused,
 Of angry aspect. Princely wisdom, then,
 Dejects his watchful eye; and from the hand
 Of feeble justice, ineffectual, drop
 The sword and balance: mute the voice of joy,
 And hushed the clamour of the busy world.
 Empty the streets, with uncouth verdure clad;
 Into the worst of deserts sudden turned
 The cheerful haunt of men: unless escaped [reigns,
 From the doomed house, where matchless horror
 Shut up by barbarous fear, the smitten wretch,
 With frenzy wild, breaks loose; and loud to Heaven
 Screaming, the dreadful policy arraigns,
 Inhuman, and unwise. The sullen door,
 Yet uninfected, on its cautious hinge
 Fearing to turn, abhors society:
 Dependants, friends, relations, Love himself,
 Savage by woe, forget the tender tie,
 The sweet engagement of the feeling heart.
 But vain their selfish care: the circling sky,
 The wide enlivening air, is full of fate;
 And, struck by turns, in solitary pangs
 They fall, unblest, untended, and unmourned.
 Thus o'er the prostrate city black Despair
 Extends her raven wing: while to complete
 The scene of desolation, stretched around,
 The grim guards stand, denying all retreat,
 And give the flying wretch a better death.

Much yet remains unsung: the rage intense
 Of brazen-vaulted skies, of iron fields,
 Where drought and famine starve the blasted year:

|| These are the causes supposed to be the first origin of the plague, in Dr. Mead's elegant book on that subject.

Fired by the torch of noon to tenfold rage,
The infuriate hill that shoots the pillared flame,
And, roused within the subterranean world,
Th' expanding earthquake, that resistless shakes
Aspiring cities from their solid base,
And buries mountains in the flaming gulf.
But 'tis enough; return, my vagrant Muse:
A nearer scene of horror calls thee home.

Behold, slow-settling o'er the lurid grove,
Unusual darkness broods, and, growing, gains
The full possession of the sky, surcharged
With wrathful vapour, from the secret beds,
Where sleep the mineral generations, drawn.
Thence nitre, sulphur, and the fiery spume
Of fat bitumen, steaming on the day,
With various-tinctured trains of latent flame,
Pollute the sky, and in yon baneful cloud
A reddening gloom, a magazine of fate,
Ferment; till, by the touch ethereal roused,
The dash of clouds, or irritating war
Of fighting winds, while all is calm below,
They furious spring. A boding silence reigns,
Dread through the dun expanse; save the dull sound
That from the mountain, previous to the storm,
Rolls o'er the muttering earth, disturbs the flood,
And shakes the forest-leaf without a breath.
Prone, to the lowest vale, the ærial tribes
Descend: the tempest-loving raven scarce
Dares wing the dubious dusk. In rueful gaze
The cattle stand, and on the scowling heavens
Cast a deploing eye; by man forsook,
Who to the crowded cottage hies him fast,
Or seeks the shelter of the downward cave.
'Tis listening fear, and dumb amazement all:
When to the startled eye the sudden glance
Appears far south, eruptive through the cloud;
And following slower, in explosion vast,
The Thunder raises his tremendous voice.
At first, heard solemn o'er the verge of Heaven,
The tempest growls; but as it nearer comes,
And rolls its awful burden on the wind,
The lightnings flash a larger curve, and more
The noise astounds: till over head a sheet
Of livid flame discloses wide; then shuts,
And opens wider; shuts and opens still
Expansive, wrapping ether in a blaze.
Follows the loosened aggravated roar,
Enlarging, deepening, mingling; peal on peal
Crushed horrible, convulsing heaven and earth.

Down comes a deluge of sonorous hail,
Or prone-descending rain. Wide-rent, the clouds
Pour a whole flood; and yet, its flame unquenched,
Th' unconquerable lightning struggles through,
Ragged and fierce, or in red whirling balls,
And fires the mountains with redoubled rage.
Black from the stroke, above, the smouldering pine
Stands a sad shattered trunk; and, stretched below,
A lifeless group the blasted cattle lie:
Here the soft flocks, with that same harmless look
They were alive, and ruminating still
In Fancy's eye; and there the frowning bull,
And ox half-raised. Struck on the castled cliff,
The venerable tower and spiry fane
Resign their aged pride. The gloomy woods
Start at the flash, and from their deep recess,
Wide-flaming out, their trembling inmates shake.
Amid Carnarvon's mountains rages loud
The repercussive roar: with mighty crash,
Into the flashing deep from the rude rocks
Of Penmaunmaur heaped hideous to the sky,

Tumble the smitten cliffs: and Snowden's peak,
Dissolving, instant yields his wintry load.
Far seen, the heights of heathly Cheviot blaze,
And Thulé bellows through her utmost isles.

Guilt hears appalled, with deeply-troubled
And yet not always on the guilty head [thought;
Descends the fated flash. Young Celadon
And his Amelia were a matchless pair;
With equal virtue formed, and equal grace,
The same, distinguished by their sex alone:
Hers, the mild lustre of the blooming morn,
And his, the radiance of the risen day.

They loved: but such the guileless passion was
As in the dawn of time informed the heart
Of innocence and undissembling truth.
'Twas friendship, heightened by the mutual wish;
Th' enchanting hope, and sympathetic glow,
Beamed from the mutual eye. Devoting all
To love, each was to each a dearer self;
Supremely happy in th' awakened power
Of giving joy. Alone, amid the shades,
Still in harmonious intercourse they lived
The rural day, and talked the flowing heart,
Or sighed and looked unutterable things.

So passed their life, a clear united stream,
By care unruffled; till, in evil hour,
The tempest caught them on the tender walk,
Heedless how far and where its mazes strayed,
While, with each other blest, creative love
Still bade eternal Eden smile around.
Presaging instant fate, her bosom heaved
Unwonted sighs, and, stealing oft a look
Of the big gloom, on Celadon her eye
Fell tearful, wetting her disordered cheek.
In vain assuring love, and confidence
In Heaven, repressed her fear; it grew, and shook
Her frame near dissolution. He perceived
Th' unequal conflict, and, as angels look
On dying saints, his eyes compassion shed,
With love illumined high. "Fear not," he said,
"Sweet innocence! thou stranger to offence,
And inward storm! He, who yon skies involves
In frowns of darkness, ever smiles on thee
With kind regard. O'er thee the secret shaft
That wastes at midnight, or th' undreaded hour
Of noon, flies harmless; and that very voice,
Which thunders terror through the guilty heart,
With tongues of seraphs whispers peace to thine.
'Tis safety to be near thee sure, and thus
To clasp perfection!" From his void embrace,
(Mysterious Heaven!) that moment, to the ground,
A blackened corse, was struck the beauteous maid.
But who can paint the lover, as he stood,
Pierced by severe amazement, hating life,
Speechless, and fixed in all the death of woe!
So (faint resemblance!) on the marble tomb,
The well-dissembled mourner stooping stands,
For ever silent, and for ever sad.

As from the face of Heaven the shattered clouds
Tumultuous rove, th' interminable sky
Sublimar swells, and o'er the world expands
A purer azure. Through the lightened air
A higher lustre and a clearer calm,
Diffusive, tremble; while, as if in sign
Of danger past, a glittering robe of joy,
Set off abundant by the yellow ray,
Invests the fields, and Nature smiles revived.

'Tis beauty all, and grateful song around,
Joined to the low of kine, and numerous bleat
Of flocks thick-nibbling through the clovered vale.

And shall the hymn be marred by thankless man,
Most favoured! who with voice articulate
Should lead the chorus of this lower world;
Shall he, so soon forgetful of the Hand
That hushed the thunder, and serenec the sky,
Extinguished feel that spark the tempest waked,
That sense of powers exceeding far his own,
Ere yet his feeble heart has lost its fears?

Cheered by the milder beam, the sprightly youth
Speeds to the well-known pool, whose crystal depth
A sandy bottom shows. Awhile he stands
Gazing th' inverted landscape, half afraid
To meditate the blue profound below;
Then plunges headlong down the circling flood.
His ebon tresses and his rosy cheek
Instant emerge; and through th' obedient wave,
At each short breathing by his lip repelled,
With arms and legs according well, he makes,
As humour leads, an easy-winding path;
While, from his polished sides, a dewy light
Effuses on the pleased spectators round.

This is the purest exercise of health,
The kind refresher of the summer-heats;
Nor, when cold Winter keens the brightening flood,
Would I, weak-shivering, linger on the brink.
Thus life redoubles, and is oft preserved,
By the bold swimmer, in the swift illapse
Of accident disastrous. Hence the limbs
Knit into force; and the same Roman arm,
That rose victorious o'er the conquered earth,
First learned, while tender, to subdue the wave.
E'en from the body's purity the mind
Receives a secret sympathetic aid.

Close in the covert of a hazel copse,
Where, winded into pleasing solitudes,
Runs out the rambling dale, young Damon sat,
Pensive, and pierced with love's delightful pangs.
There to the stream that down the distant rocks
Hoarse murmuring fell, and plaintive breeze that
Among the bending willows, falsely he [played
Of Musidora's cruelty complained.
She felt his flame; but deep within her breast,
In bashful coyness, or in maiden pride,
The soft return concealed, save when it stole
In side-long glances from her downcast eye,
Or from her swelling soul in stifled sighs.
Touched by the scene, no stranger to his vows,
He framed a melting lay to try her heart;
And, if an infant passion struggled there,
To call that passion forth. Thrice happy swain!
A lucky chance, that oft decides the fate
Of mighty monarchs, then decided thine.
For lo! conducted by the laughing Loves,
This cool retreat his Musidora sought:
Warm in her cheek the sultry season glowed;
And, robed in loose array she came to bathe
Her fervent limbs in the refreshing stream.
What shall he do? In sweet confusion lost,
And dubious flutterings, he awhile remained;
A pure ingenuous elegance of soul,
A delicate refinement, known to few,
Perplexed his breast, and urged him to retire:
But love forbade. Ye prudes in virtue, say,
Say, ye severest, what would you have done?
Meantime, this fairer nymph than ever blest
Arcadian stream, with timid eye around
The banks surveying, stripped her beauteous
To taste the lucid coolness of the flood. [limbs,
Ah then! not Paris on the piny top
Of Ida panted stronger, when aside

The rival goddesses the veil divine
Cast unconfined, and gave him all their charms,
Than, Damon, thou; as from the snowy leg,
And slender foot, th' inverted silk she drew;
As the soft touch dissolved the virgin zone;
And, through the parting robe, th' alternate breast,
With youth wild-throbbing, on thy lawless gaze
In full luxuriance rose. But, desperate youth,
How durst thou risk the soul-distracting view,
As from her naked limbs, of glowing white,
Harmonious swelled by Nature's finest hand,
In folds loose-floating fell the fainter lawn;
And fair-exposed she stood, shrunk from herself,
With fancy blushing, at the doubtful breeze
Alarmed, and starting like the fearful fawn?
Then to the flood she rushed; the parted flood
Its lovely guest with closing waves received;
And every beauty softening, every grace
Flushing anew, a mellow lustre shed:
As shines the lily through the crystal mild;
Or as the rose amid the morning dew,
Fresh from Aurora's hand, more sweetly glows.
While thus she wanted, now beneath the wave
But ill concealed, and now with streaming locks,
That half embraced her in a humid veil,
Rising again, the latent Damon drew
Such maddening draughts of beauty to the soul,
As for awhile o'erwhelmed his raptured thought
With luxury too daring. Checked, at last,
By love's respectful modesty, he deemed
The theft profane, if aught profane to love [shade,
Can e'er be deemed; and, struggling from the
With headlong hurry fled: but first these lines,
Traced by his ready pencil, on the bank [fair,
With trembling hand he threw. "Bathe on, my
Yet unbeheld, save by the sacred eye
Of faithful love: I go to guard thy haunt,
To keep from thy recess each vagrant foot,
And each licentious eye." With wild surprise,
As if to marble struck, devoid of sense,
A stupid moment motionless she stood:
So stands the statue* that enchants the world,
So bending tries to veil the matchless boast,
The mingled beauties of exulting Greece.
Recovering, swift she flew to find those robes
Which blissful Eden knew not; and, arrayed
In careless haste th' alarming paper snatched.
But, when her Damon's well-known hand she saw,
Her terrors vanished, and a softer train
Of mixed emotions, hard to be described,
Her sudden bosom seized: shame void of guilt,
The charming blush of innocence, esteem,
And admiration of her lover's flame,
By modesty exalted: e'en a sense
Of self-approving beauty stole across
Her busy thought. At length a tender calm
Hushed by degrees the tumult of her soul;
And on the spreading beech, that o'er the stream
Incumbent hung, she with the silvan pen
Of rural lovers this confession carved,
Which soon her Damon kissed with weeping joy:
"Dear youth, sole judge of what these verses
By fortune too much favoured, but by love, [mean,
Alas! not favoured less, be still as now
Discreet: the time may come you need not fly."
The sun has lost his rage: his downward orb
Shoots nothing now but animating warmth,
And vital lustre; that, with various ray, [Heaven,
Lights up the clouds, those beauteous robes of

* The Venus de' Medici.

Incessant rolled into romantic shapes,
 The dream of waking Fancy. Broad below,
 Covered with ripening fruits, and swelling fast
 Into the perfect year, the pregnant earth
 And all her tribes rejoice. Now the soft hour
 Of walking comes : for him who lonely loves
 To seek the distant hills, and there converse
 With Nature ; there to harmonise his heart,
 And in pathetic song to breathe around
 The harmony to others. Social friends,
 Attuned to happy unison of soul ;
 To whose exalting eye a fairer world,
 Of which the vulgar never had a glimpse,
 Displays its charms ; whose minds are richly fraught
 With philosophic stores, superior light ;
 And in whose breast, enthusiastic, burns
 Virtue, the sons of interest deem romance ;
 Now called abroad enjoy the falling day :
 Now to the verdant Portico of woods,
 To Nature's vast Lyceum forth they walk ;
 By that kind School where no proud master reigns,
 The full free converse of the friendly heart,
 Improving and improved. Now from the world,
 Sacred to sweet retirement, lovers steal,
 And pour their souls in transport, which the sire
 Of love approving hears, and calls it good.
 Which way, Amanda, shall we bend our course ?
 The choice perplexes. Wherefore should we choose ?
 All is the same with thee. Say, shall we wind
 Along the streams ? or walk the smiling mead ?
 Or court the forest-glades ? or wander wild
 Among the waving harvests ? or ascend,
 While radiant Summer opens all its pride,
 Thy hill, delightful Shene* ? Here let us sweep
 The boundless landscape : now the raptured eye,
 Exulting, swift to huge Augusta send,
 Now to the Sister-Hills† that skirt her plain ;
 To lofty Harrow now, and now to where
 Majestic Windsor lifts his princely brow.
 In lovely contrast to this glorious view,
 Calmly magnificent, then will we turn
 To where the silver Thames first rural grows.
 There let the feasted eye unwearied stray :
 Luxurious, there, rove through the pendent woods
 That nodding hang o'er Harrington's retreat :
 And, stooping thence to Ham's embowering walks,
 Beneath whose shades, in spotless peace retired,
 With Her the pleasing partner of his heart,
 The worthy Queensberry yet laments his Gay,
 And polished Cornbury woos the willing Muse,
 Slow let us trace the matchless vale of Thames ;
 Fair winding up to where the muses haunt
 In Twick'nam's bowers, and for their Pope implore
 The healing God‡ ; to royal Hampton's pile,
 To Clermont's terraced height, and Esher's groves,
 Where in the sweetest solitude, embraced
 By the soft windings of the silent Mole,
 From courts and senates Pelham finds repose.
 Enchanting vale ! beyond whate'er the Muse
 Has of Achaia or Hesperia sung !
 O vale of bliss ! O softly-swelling hills !
 On which the Power of Cultivation lies,
 And joys to see the wonders of his toil.
 Heavens ! what a goodly prospect spreads around,
 Of hills, and dales, and woods, and lawns, and spires,
 And glittering towns, and gilded streams, till all
 The stretching landscape into smoke decays !

* The old name of Richmond ; signifying, in Saxon,
shining or splendour.

† Highgate and Hampstead.

‡ In his last sickness.

Happy Britannia ! where the Queen of Arts,
 Inspiring vigour, Liberty abroad
 Walks unconfined, e'en to thy farthest cots,
 And scatters plenty with unsparing hand.

Rich is thy soil, and merciful thy clime ;
 Thy streams unfailing in the Summer's drought ;
 Unmatched thy guardian-oaks ; thy valleys float
 With golden waves ; and on thy mountains flocks
 Bleat numberless ; while, roving round their sides,
 Bellow the blackening herds in lusty droves.
 Beneath, thy meadows glow, and rise unquelled
 Against the mower's scythe. On every hand
 Thy villas shine. Thy country teems with wealth ;
 And property assures it to the swain,
 Pleased, and unwearied, in his guarded toil.

Full are thy cities with the sons of Art :
 And trade and joy, in every busy street,
 Mingling are heard : e'en Drudgery himself,
 As at the car he sweats, or dusty hews
 The palace-stone, looks gay. Thy crowded ports,
 Where rising masts an endless prospect yield,
 With labour burn, and echo to the shouts
 Of hurried sailor, as he hearty waves
 His last adieu, and loosening every sheet,
 Resigns the spreading vessel to the wind.

Bold, firm, and graceful, are thy generous youth,
 By hardship sinewed, and by danger fired,
 Scattering the nations where they go ; and first
 Or on the listed plain, or stormy seas.
 Mild are thy glories too, as o'er the plains
 Of thriving peace thy thoughtful sires preside ;
 In genius, and substantial learning, high ;
 For every virtue, every worth, renowned ;
 Sincere, plain-hearted, hospitable, kind ;
 Yet like the mustering thunder when provoked,
 The dread of tyrants, and the sole resource
 Of those that under grim oppression groan.

Thy sons of Glory many ! Alfred thine,
 In whom the splendour of heroic war,
 And more heroic peace, when governed well,
 Combine ; whose hallowed name the Virtues saint,
 And his own Muses love ; the best of kings !
 With him thy Edwards and thy Henries shine,
 Names dear to Fame ; the first who deep impressed
 On haughty Gaul the terror of thy arms,
 That awes her genius still. In statesmen thou,
 And patriots, fertile. Thine a steady More,
 Who, with a generous though mistaken zeal,
 Withstood a brutal tyrant's useful rage,
 Like Cato firm, like Aristides just,
 Like rigid Cincinnatus nobly poor,
 A dauntless soul erect, who smiled on death.
 Frugal and wise, a Walsingham is thine ;
 A Drake, who made thee mistress of the deep,
 And bore thy name in thunder round the world.
 Then flamed thy spirit high ; but who can speak
 The numerous worthies of the Maiden Reign ?
 In Raleigh mark their every glory mixed ; [all
 Raleigh, the scourge of Spain ! whose breast with
 The sage, the patriot, and the hero burned ;
 Nor sunk his vigour, when a coward-reign
 The warrior fettered, and at last resigned,
 To glut the vengeance of a vanquished foe.
 Then, active still and unrestrained, his mind
 Explored the vast extent of ages past,
 And with his prison-hours enriched the world ;
 Yet found no times, in all the long research,
 So glorious, or so base, as those he proved,
 In which he conquered, and in which he bled.
 Nor can the Muse the gallant Sidney pass,

The plume of war! with early laurels crowned,
 The lover's myrtle, and the poet's bay.
 A Hampden too is thine, illustrious land!
 Wise, strenuous, firm, of unsubmitting soul,
 Who stemmed the torrent of a downward age
 To slavery prone, and bade thee rise again
 In all thy native pomp of freedom bold.
 Bright, at his call, thy Age of Men effulged,
 Of men on whom late time a kindling eye
 Shall turn, and tyrants tremble while they read.
 Bring every sweetest flower, and let me strew
 The grave where Russel lies; whose tempered
 With calmest cheerfulness for thee resigned, [blood,
 Stained the sad annals of a giddy reign;
 Aiming at lawless power, though meanly sunk
 In loose inglorious luxury. With him
 His friend, the British Cassius*, fearless bled;
 Of high determined spirit, roughly brave,
 By ancient learning to the enlightened love
 Of ancient freedom warmed. Fair thy renown
 In awful sages and in noble bards;
 Soon as the light of dawning Science spread
 Her orient ray, and waked the Muses' song.
 Thine is a Bacon; hapless in his choice,
 Unfit to stand the civil storm of state,
 And through the smooth barbarity of courts,
 With firm but pliant virtue, forward still
 To urge his course: him for the studious shade
 Kind Nature formed, deep, comprehensive, clear,
 Exact, and elegant; in one rich soul
 Plato, the Stagyrte, and Tully, joined.
 The great deliverer he! who from the gloom
 Of cloistered monks, and jargon-teaching schools,
 Led forth the true Philosophy, there long
 Held in the magic chain of words and forms,
 And definitions void: he led her forth,
 Daughter of Heaven! that slow ascending still,
 Investigating sure the chain of things,
 With radiant finger points to Heaven again.
 The generous Ashley† thine, the friend of man;
 Who scanned his nature with a brother's eye,
 His weakness prompt to shade, to raise his aim,
 To touch the finer movements of the mind,
 And with the moral beauty charm the heart.
 Why need I name thy Boyle, whose pious search
 Amid the dark recesses of his works
 The great Creator sought? And why thy Locke,
 Who made the whole internal world his own?
 Let Newton, pure intelligence, whom God
 To mortals lent, to trace His boundless works
 From laws sublimely simple, speak thy fame
 In all philosophy. For lofty sense,
 Creative fancy, and inspection keen
 Through the deep windings of the human heart,
 Is not wild Shakspeare thine and Nature's boast?
 Is not each great, each amiable Muse
 Of classic ages in thy Milton met?
 A genius universal as his theme,
 Astonishing as Chaos, as the bloom
 Of blowing Eden fair, as Heaven sublime?
 Nor shall my verse that elder bard forget,
 The gentle Spenser, Fancy's pleasing son;
 Who, like a copious river, poured his song
 O'er all the mazes of enchanted ground:
 Nor thee, his ancient master, laughing sage,
 Chaucer, whose native manners-painting verse,
 Well moralised, shines through the Gothic cloud
 Of time and language o'er thy genius thrown.

* Algernon Sidney.

† Anthony Ashley Cooper, earl of Shaftesbury.

May my song soften, as thy daughters I,
 Britannia, hail! for beauty is their own,
 The feeling heart, simplicity of life,
 And elegance, and taste: the faultless form,
 Shaped by the hand of Harmony; the cheek,
 Where the live crimson, through the native white
 Soft-shooting, o'er the face diffuses bloom,
 And every nameless grace; the parted lip,
 Like the red rose-bud moist with morning-dew,
 Breathing delight; and, under flowing jet,
 Or sunny ringlets, or of circling brown,
 The neck slight-shaded, and the swelling breast;
 The look resistless, piercing to the soul,
 And by the soul informed, when dressed in love
 She sits high-smiling in the conscious eye.

Island of bliss! amid the subject seas,
 That thunder round thy rocky coasts, set up,
 At once the wonder, terror, and delight,
 Of distant nations, whose remotest shores
 Can soon be shaken by thy naval arm;
 Not to be shook thyself, but all assaults
 Baffling, as thy hoar cliffs the loud sea-wave.

O Thou! by whose Almighty nod the scale
 Of empire rises, or alternate falls,
 Send forth the saving Virtues round the land,
 In bright patrol: white Peace, and social Love;
 The tender-looking Charity, intent
 On gentle deeds, and shedding tears through smiles;
 Undaunted Truth, and Dignity of mind;
 Courage composed, and keen; sound Temperance,
 Healthful in heart and look; clear Chastity,
 With blushes reddening as she moves along,
 Disordered at the deep regard she draws;
 Rough Industry; Activity untired,
 With copious life informed, and all awake;
 While in the radiant front superior shines
 That first paternal virtue, Public Zeal;
 Who throws o'er all an equal wide survey,
 And, ever musing on the common weal,
 Still labours glorious with some great design.

Low walks the sun, and broadens by degrees,
 Just o'er the verge of day. The shifting clouds
 Assembled gay, a richly gorgeous train,
 In all their pomp attend his setting throne.
 Air, earth, and ocean smile immense. And now,
 As if his weary chariot sought the bowers
 Of Amphitrite, and her tending nymphs,
 (So Grecian fable sung) he dips his orb;
 Now half-immersed, and now a golden curve,
 Gives one bright glance, then total disappears.

For ever running an enchanted round,
 Passes the day, deceitful, vain, and void;
 As fleets the vision o'er the formful brain,
 This moment hurrying wild th' impassioned soul
 The next in nothing lost. 'Tis so to him,
 The dreamer of this earth, an idle blank:
 A sight of horror to the cruel wretch,
 Who all day long in sordid pleasure rolled,
 Himself a useless load, has squandered vile,
 Upon his scoundrel train, what might have cheered
 A drooping family of modest worth.
 But to the generous still-improving mind,
 That gives the hopeless heart to sing for joy,
 Diffusing kind beneficence around,
 Boastless, as now descends the silent dew;
 To him the long review of ordered life
 Is inward rapture, only to be felt.

Confessed from yonder slow-extinguished clouds,
 All ether softening, sober Evening takes
 Her wonted station in the middle air;

A thousand shadows at her beck. First this
 She sends on earth; then that of deeper dye
 Steals soft behind; and then a deeper still,
 In circle following circle, gathers round,
 To close the face of things. A fresher gale
 Begins to wave the wood, and stir the stream,
 Sweeping with shadowy gust the fields of corn;
 While the quail clamours for his running mate.
 Wide o'er the thistly lawn, as swells the breeze,
 A whitening shower of vegetable down
 Amusive floats. The kind impartial care
 Of Nature nought disdains: thoughtful to feed
 Her lowest sons, and clothe the coming year,
 From field to field the feathered seed she wings.

His folded flock secure, the shepherd home
 Hies, merry-hearted; and by turns relieves
 The ruddy milkmaid of her brimming pail;
 The beauty whom perhaps his witless heart,
 Unknowing what the joy-mixed anguish means,
 Sincerely loves, by that best language shown
 Of cordial glances, and obliging deeds.
 Onward they pass, o'er many a panting height,
 And valley sunk, and unfrequented; where
 At fall of eve the fairy people throng,
 In various game, and revelry, to pass
 The summer night, as village-stories tell.
 But far about they wander from the grave
 Of him, whom his ungente fortune urged
 Against his own sad breast to lift the hand
 Of impious violence. The lonely tower
 Is also shunned; whose mournful chambers hold,
 So night-struck Fancy dreams, the yelling ghost.

Among the crooked lanes, on every hedge,
 The glow-worm lights his gems; and, through the
 A moving radiance twinkles. Evening yields [dark,
 The world to Night; not in her winter robe
 Of massy Stygian woof, but loose arrayed
 In mantle dun. A faint erroneous ray,
 Glanced from th' imperfect surfaces of things,
 Flings half an image on the straining eye;
 While wavering woods, and villages, and streams,
 And rocks, and mountain-tops, that long retained
 Th' ascending gleam, are all one swimming scene,
 Uncertain if beheld. Sudden to Heaven
 Thence weary vision turns, where, leading soft
 The silent hours of love, with purest ray
 Sweet Venus shines; and from her genial rise,
 When day-light sickens till it springs afresh,
 Unrivalled reigns, the fairest lamp of Night.
 As thus th' effulgence tremulous I drink,
 With cherished gaze, the lambent lightnings shoot
 Across the sky, or horizontal dart
 In wondrous shapes: by fearful murmuring crowds
 Portentous deemed. Amid the radiant orbs
 That more than deck, that animate the sky,
 The life-infusing suns of other worlds;
 Lo! from the dread immensity of space
 Returning, with accelerated course,
 The rushing comet to the sun descends;
 And as he sinks below the shading earth,
 With awful train projected o'er the heavens,
 The guilty nations tremble. But, above
 Those superstitious horrors that enslave
 The fond sequacious herd, to mystic faith
 And blind amazement prone, the enlightened few,
 Whose godlike minds Philosophy exalts,
 The glorious stranger hail. They feel a joy
 Divinely great; they in their powers exult,
 That wondrous force of thought, with mounting
 This dusky spot, and measures all the sky; [spurns

While, from his far excursion through the wilds
 Of barren ether, faithful to his time,
 They see the blazing wonder rise anew,
 In seeming terror clad, but kindly bent
 To work the will of all-sustaining Love:
 From his huge vapoury train perhaps to shake
 Reviving moisture on the numerous orbs,
 Through which his long ellipsis winds; perhaps
 To lend new fuel to declining suns,
 To light up worlds, and feed th' eternal fire.

With thee, serene Philosophy, with thee,
 And thy bright garland, let me crown my song!
 Effusive source of evidence, and truth!
 A lustre shedding o'er the ennobled mind,
 Stronger than summer-noon; and pure as that
 Whose mild vibrations soothe the parted soul,
 New to the dawning of celestial day.
 Hence through her nourished powers, enlarged by
 She springs aloft, with elevated pride, [thee,
 Above the tangling mass of low desires,
 That bind the fluttering crowd; and, angel-winged,
 The heights of science and of virtue gains,
 Where all is calm and clear; with Nature round,
 Or in the starry regions, or th' abyss,
 To Reason's and to Fancy's eye displayed:
 The First up-tracing, from the dreary void,
 The chain of causes and effects to Him,
 The world-producing Essence, who alone
 Possesses being; while the Last receives
 The whole magnificence of heaven and earth,
 And every beauty, delicate or bold,
 Obvious or more remote, with livelier sense,
 Diffusive painted on the rapid mind.

Tutored by thee, hence Poetry exalts
 Her voice to ages, and informs the page
 With music, image, sentiment, and thought,
 Never to die! the treasure of mankind!
 Their highest honour, and their truest joy!

Without thee what were unlightened man?
 A savage roaming through the woods and wilds
 In quest of prey; and with th' unfashioned fur
 Rough clad; devoid of every finer art,
 And elegance of life. Nor happiness
 Domestic, mixed of tenderness and care,
 Nor moral excellence, nor social bliss,
 Nor guardian law were his; nor various skill
 To turn the furrow, or to guide the tool
 Mechanic, nor the heaven-conducted prow
 Of navigation bold, that fearless braves
 The burning line or dares the wintry pole;
 Mother severe of infinite delights!
 Nothing, save rapine, indolence, and guile,
 And woes on woes, a still-revolving train!
 Whose horrid circle had made human life
 Than non-existence worse: but, taught by thee,
 Ours are the plans of policy and peace,
 To live like brothers, and conjunctive all
 Embellish life. While thus laborious crowds
 Ply the tough oar, Philosophy directs
 The ruling helm; or, like the liberal breath
 Of potent Heaven, invisible, the sail
 Swells out, and bears th' inferior world along.

Nor to this evanescent speck of earth
 Poorly confined, the radiant tracts on high
 Are her exalted range; intent to gaze
 Creation through; and, from that full complex
 Of never-ending wonders, to conceive
 Of the Sole Being right, who spoke the Word,
 And Nature moved complete. With inward view,
 Thence on th' ideal kingdom swift she turns

Her eye; and, instant, at her powerful glance,
 Th' obedient phantoms vanish or appear;
 Compound, divide, and into order shift,
 Each to his rank, from plain perception up
 To the fair forms of Fancy's fleeting train:
 To reason then, deducing truth from truth;
 And notion quite abstract; where first begins
 The world of spirits, action all, and life
 Unfettered and unmixed. But here the cloud,
 (So wills eternal Providence) sits deep.
 Enough for us to know that this dark state,
 In wayward passions lost, and vain pursuits,
 This Infancy of Being, cannot prove
 The final issue of the works of God,
 By boundless Love and perfect Wisdom formed,
 And ever rising with the rising mind.

AUTUMN.

ARGUMENT.

The subject proposed. Addressed to Mr. Onslow. A prospect of the fields ready for harvest. Reflections in praise of industry raised by that view. Reaping. A tale relative to it. A harvest storm. Shooting and hunting; their barbarity. A ludicrous account of fox-hunting. A view of an orchard. Wall-fruit. A vineyard. A description of fogs, frequent in the latter part of Autumn; whence a digression, inquiring into the rise of fountains and rivers. Birds of season considered, that now shift their habitation. The prodigious number of them that cover the northern and western isles of Scotland. Hence a view of the country. A prospect of the discoloured, fading woods. After a gentle dusky day, moonlight. Autumnal meteors. Morning: to which succeeds a calm, pure, sunshiny day, such as usually shuts up the season. The harvest being gathered in, the country dissolved in joy. The whole concludes with a panegyric on a philosophical country life.

CROWNED with the sickle and the wheaten sheaf,
 While Autumn, nodding o'er the yellow plain,
 Comes jovial on; the Doric reed once more,
 Well pleased, I tune. Whate'er the wintry frost
 Nitrous prepared; the various-blossomed Spring
 Put in white promise forth; and Summer-suns
 Concocted strong, rush boundless now to view,
 Full, perfect all, and swell my glorious theme.

Onslow! the Muse, ambitious of thy name,
 To grace, inspire, and dignify her song,
 Would from the public voice thy gentle ear
 Awhile engage. Thy noble cares she knows,
 The patriot virtues that distend thy thought,
 Spread on thy front, and in thy bosom glow;
 While listening senates hang upon thy tongue,
 Devolving through the maze of eloquence
 A roll of periods, sweeter than her song.
 But she too pants for public virtue, she,
 Though weak of power, yet strong in ardent will,
 Whene'er her country rushes on her heart,
 Assumes a bolder note, and fondly tries
 To mix the patriot's with the poet's flame.

When the bright Virgin gives the beauteous
 And Libra weighs in equal scales the year; [days,
 From Heaven's high cope the fierce effulgence
 Of parting Summer, a serener blue, [shook
 With golden light enlivened, wide invests
 The happy world. Attempered suns arise, [clouds
 Sweet-beamed, and shedding oft through lucid
 A pleasing calm; while broad, and brown, below
 Extensive harvests hang the heavy head.
 Rich, silent, deep, they stand; for not a gale
 Rolls its light billows o'er the bending plain:

A calm of plenty! till the ruffled air
 Falls from its poise, and gives the breeze to blow.
 Rent is the fleecy mantle of the sky;
 The clouds fly different; and the sudden sun
 By fits effulgent gilds th' illumined field,
 And black by fits the shadows sweep along.
 A gaily-checked heart-expanding view,
 Far as the circling eye can shoot around,
 Unbounded tossing in a flood of corn.
 These are thy blessings, Industry! rough power!
 Whom labour still attends, and sweat, and pain;
 Yet the kind source of every gentle art,
 And all the soft civility of life:
 Raiser of human kind! by Nature cast,
 Naked, and helpless, out amid the woods
 And wilds, to rude inclement elements;
 With various seeds of art deep in the mind
 Implanted, and profusely poured around
 Materials infinite, but idle all.
 Still unexerted, in the unconscious breast,
 Slept the lethargic powers; Corruption still,
 Voracious, swallowed what the liberal hand
 Of bounty scattered o'er the savage year:
 And still the sad barbarian, roving, mixed
 With beasts of prey; or for his acorn-meal
 Fought the fierce tusky boar; a shivering wretch!
 Aghast, and comfortless, when the bleak north,
 With Winter charged, let the mixed tempest fly,
 Hail, rain, and snow, and bitter-breathing frost:
 Then to the shelter of the hut he fled;
 And the wild season, sordid, pined away.
 For home he had not; home is the resort
 Of love, of joy, of peace and plenty, where,
 Supporting and supported, polished friends,
 And dear relations, mingle into bliss.
 But this the rugged savage never felt,
 E'en desolate in crowds; and thus his days
 Rolled heavy, dark, and unenjoyed along,
 A waste of time! till Industry approached,
 And roused him from his miserable sloth:
 His faculties unfolded; pointed out,
 Where lavish Nature the directing hand
 Of Art demanded; showed him how to raise
 His feeble force by the mechanic powers,
 To dig the mineral from the vaulted earth,
 On what to turn the piercing rage of fire,
 On what the torrent, and the gathered blast;
 Gave the tall ancient forest to his axe;
 Taught him to chip the wood, and hew the stone,
 Till by degrees the finished fabric rose;
 Tore from his limbs the blood-polluted fur,
 And wrapt them in the woolly vestment warm,
 Or bright in glossy silk, and flowing lawn;
 With wholesome viands filled his table, poured
 The generous glass around, inspired to wake
 The life-refining soul of decent wit:
 Nor stopped at barren bare necessity;
 But still advancing bolder, led him on
 To pomp, to pleasure, elegance, and grace;
 And, breathing high ambition through his soul,
 Set science, wisdom, glory, in his view,
 And bade him be the Lord of all below.

Then gathering men their natural powers com-
 And formed a Public; to the general good [bined,
 Submitting, aiming, and conducting all.
 For this the Patriot-Council met, the full,
 The free, and fairly represented Whole;
 For this they planned the holy guardian laws,
 Distinguished orders, animated arts,
 And, with joint force Oppression chaining, set

Imperial Justice at the helm, yet still
To them accountable: nor slavish dreamed
That toiling millions must resign their weal,
And all the honey of their search, to such
As for themselves alone themselves have raised.

Hence every form of cultivated life
In order set, protected, and inspired,
Into perfection wrought. Uniting all,
Society grew numerous, high, polite,
And happy. Nurse of art! the city reared
In beauteous pride her tower-encircled head;
And, stretching street on street, by thousands drew,
From twining woody haunts, or the tough yew
To bows strong-straining, her aspiring sons.

Then Commerce brought into the public walk
The busy merchant; the big warehouse built;
Raised the strong crane; choked up the loaded street
With foreign plenty; and thy stream, O Thames,
Large, gentle, deep, majestic, king of floods!
Chose for his grand resort. On either hand,
Like a long wintry forest, groves of masts
Shot up their spires; the belling sheet between
Possessed the breezy void; the sooty hulk
Steered sluggish on; the splendid barge along
Rowed, regular, to harmony; around,
The boat, light-skimming, stretched its oary wings;
While deep the various voice of fervent toil [oak,
From bank to bank increased; whence ribbed with
To bear the British thunder, black, and bold,
The roaring vessel rushed into the main.

Then too the pillared dome, magnific, heaved
Its ample roof; and Luxury within
Poured out her glittering stores: the canvass smooth,
With glowing life protuberant, to the view
Embodied rose; the statue seemed to breathe,
And soften into flesh; beneath the touch
Of forming art, imagination-flushed.

All is the gift of industry; whate'er
Exalts, embellishes, and renders life
Delightful. Pensive Winter, cheer'd by him
Sits at the social fire, and happy hears
Th' excluded tempest idly rave along;
His hardened fingers deck the gaudy Spring;
Without him Summer were an arid waste;
Nor to th' autumnal months could thus transmit
Those full, mature, immeasurable stores,
That, waving round, recal my wandering song.

Soon as the morning trembles o'er the sky,
And, unperceived, unfolds the spreading day;
Before the ripened field the reapers stand,
In fair array, each by the lass he loves,
To bear the rougher part, and mitigate
By nameless gentle offices her toil.

At once they stoop, and swell the lusty sheaves;
While through their cheerful band the rural talk,
The rural scandal, and the rural jest,
Fly harmless, to deceive the tedious time,
And steal unfelt the sultry hours away.
Behind the master walks, builds up the shocks;
And, conscious, glancing oft on every side
His sated eye, feels his heart heave with joy.
The gleaners spread around, and here and there,
Spoke after spike, their scanty harvest pick.
Be not too narrow, husbandmen! but fling
From the full sheaf, with charitable stealth,
The liberal handful. Think, oh grateful think!
How good the God of Harvest is to you;
Who pours abundance o'er your flowing fields;
While these unhappy partners of your kind
Wide-lover round you, like the fowls of heaven,

And ask their humble dole. The various turns
Of fortune ponder; that your sons may want
What now, with hard reluctance, faint, ye give.

The lovely young Lavinia once had friends;
And fortune smiled, deceitful, on her birth.
For, in her helpless years deprived of all,
Of every stay, save Innocence and Heaven,
She with her widowed mother, feeble, old,
And poor, lived in a cottage, far retired
Among the windings of a woody vale;
By solitude and deep surrounding shades,
But more by bashful modesty, concealed.
Together thus they shunned the cruel scorn
Which virtue, sunk to poverty, would meet
From giddy passion and low-minded pride;
Almost on Nature's common bounty fed;
Like the gay birds that sung them to repose,
Content, and careless of to-morrow's fare.
Her form was fresher than the morning rose,
When the dew wets its leaves; unstained and pure
As is the lily, or the mountain snow.
The modest Virtues mingled in her eyes,
Still on the ground dejected, darting all
Their humid beams into the blooming flowers:
Or when the mournful tale her mother told,
Of what her faithless fortune promised once,
Thrilled in her thought, they, like the dewy star
Of evening, shone in tears. A native grace
Sat fair-proportioned on her polished limbs,
Veiled in a simple robe, their best attire,
Beyond the pomp of dress; for loveliness
Needs not the foreign aid of ornament,
But is, when unadorned, adorned the most.
Thoughtless of beauty, she was Beauty's self,
Recluse amid the close-embowering woods.
As in the hollow breast of Apennine,
Beneath the shelter of encircling hills,
A myrtle rises, far from human eye,
And breathes its balmy fragrance o'er the wild;
So flourished blooming, and unseen by all,
The sweet Lavinia; till, at length, compelled
By strong Necessity's supreme command,
With smiling patience in her looks, she went
To glean Palemon's fields. The pride of swains
Palemon was, the generous, and the rich;
Who led the rural life in all its joy
And elegance, such as Arcadian song
Transmits from ancient uncorrupted times;
When tyrant custom had not shackled man,
But free to follow Nature was the mode.
He then, his fancy with autumnal scenes
Amusing, chanced beside his reaper-train
To walk, when poor Lavinia drew his eye;
Unconscious of her power, and turning quick
With unaffected blushes from his gaze:
He saw her charming, but he saw not half
The charms her downcast modesty concealed.
That very moment love and chaste desire
Sprung in his bosom, to himself unknown;
For still the world prevailed and its dread laugh,
Which scarce the firm philosopher can scorn,
Should his heart own a gleaner in the field;
And thus in secret to his soul he sighed:—

“What pity! that so delicate a form,
By beauty kindled, where enlivening sense
And more than vulgar goodness seem to dwell,
Should be devoted to the rude embrace
Of some indecent clown! she looks, methinks,
Of old Acasto's line; and to my mind
Recalls that patron of my happy life,

From whom my liberal fortune took its rise ;
Now to the dust gone down ; his houses, lands,
And once fair-spreading family, dissolved.
'Tis said that in some lone obscure retreat,
Urged by remembrance sad, and decent pride,
Far from those scenes which knew their better days,
His aged widow and his daughter live,
Whom yet my fruitless search could never find.
Romantic wish ! would this the daughter were !"

When, strict inquiring, from herself he found
She was the same, the daughter of his friend,
Of bountiful Acasto ; who can speak
The mingled passions that surprised his heart,
And through his nerves in shivering transport ran ?
Then blazed his smothered flame, avowed, and bold ;
And as he viewed her, ardent, o'er and o'er,
Love, gratitude, and pity wept at once.
Confused, and frightened at his sudden tears,
Her rising beauties flushed a higher bloom,
As thus Palemon, passionate and just,
Poured out the pious rapture of his soul :—

" And art thou then Acasto's dear remains ?
She whom my restless gratitude has sought
So long in vain ? O heavens ! the very same,
The softened image of my noble friend ;
Alive his every look, his every feature ;
More elegantly touched. Sweeter than Spring !
Thou sole surviving blossom from the root
That nourished up my fortune ! Say, ah where,
In what sequestered desert hast thou drawn
The kindest aspect of delighted Heaven ?
Into such beauty spread, and blown so fair ;
Though Poverty's cold wind, and crushing rain,
Beat keen and heavy on thy tender years ?
O let me now into a richer soil
Transplant thee safe ! where vernal suns and showers
Diffuse their warmest, largest influence ;
And of my garden be the pride and joy !
Ill it befits thee, oh it ill befits
Acasto's daughter, his, whose open stores,
Though vast, were little to his ampler heart,
The father of a country, thus to pick
The very refuse of those harvest-fields
Which from his bounteous friendship I enjoy.
Then throw that shameful pittance from thy hand,
But ill applied to such a rugged task ;
The fields, the master, all, my fair, are thine :
If to the various blessings which thy house
Has on me lavished thou wilt add that bliss,
That dearest bliss, the power of blessing thee !"

Here ceased the youth : yet still his speaking eye
Expressed the sacred triumph of his soul,
With conscious virtue, gratitude, and love,
Above the vulgar joy divinely raised.
Nor waited he reply. Won by the charm
Of goodness irresistible, and all
In sweet disorder lost, she blushed consent.
The news immediate to her mother brought,
While, pierced with anxious thought, she pined
The lonely moments for Lavinia's fate ; [away
Amazed, and scarce believing what she heard,
Joy seized her withered veins, and one bright gleam
Of setting life shone on her evening-hours :
Not less enraptured than the happy pair,
Who flourished long in tender bliss, and reared
A numerous offspring, lovely like themselves,
And good, and the grace of all the country round.

Defeating oft the labours of the year,
The sultry south collects a potent blast.
At first the groves are scarcely seen to stir

Their trembling tops, and a still murmur runs
Along the soft-inclining fields of corn.
But as the ærial tempest fuller swells,
And in one mighty stream, invisible,
Immense, the whole excited atmosphere
Impetuous rushes o'er the sounding world :
Strained to the root, the stooping forest pours
A rustling shower of yet untimely leaves.
High-beat, the circling mountains eddy in,
From the bare wild, the dissipated storm,
And send it in a torrent down the vale.
Exposed, and naked, to its utmost rage,
Through all the sea of harvest rolling round,
The billowy plain floats wide, nor can evade,
Though pliant to the blast, its seizing force ;
Or whirled in air, or into vacant chaff
Shook waste. And sometimes too a burst of rain,
Swept from the black horizon, broad, descends
In one continuous flood. Still over head
The mingling tempest waves its gloom, and still
The deluge deepens, till the fields around
Lie sunk, and flatted, in the sordid wave.
Sudden the ditches swell, the meadows swim.
Red, from the hills, innumerable streams
Tumultuous roar, and high above its banks
The river lift, before whose rushing tide
Herds, flocks, and harvests, cottages, and swains,
Roll mingled down ; all that the winds had spared
In one wild moment ruined ; the big hopes
And well-earned treasures of the painful year.
Fled to some eminence, the husbandman
Helpless beholds the miserable wreck
Driving along ; his drowning ox at once
Descending, with his labours scattered round,
He sees ; and instant o'er his shivering thought
Comes Winter unprovided, and a train
Of clamant children dear. Ye masters, then,
Be mindful of the rough laborious hand
That sinks you soft in elegance and ease ;
Be mindful of those limbs, in russet clad,
Whose toil to yours is warmth and graceful pride ;
And, oh ! be mindful of that sparing board
Which covers yours with luxury profuse,
Makes your glass sparkle, and your sense rejoice !
Nor cruelly demand what the deep rains
And all-involving winds have swept away.

Here the rude clamour of the sportsman's joy,
The gun fast-thundering, and the winded horn,
Would tempt the Muse to sing the rural game :
How in his mid-career the spaniel struck,
Stiff, by the tainted gale, with open nose,
Outstretched and finely sensible, draws full,
Fearful and cautious, on the latent prey ;
As in the sun the circling covey bask
Their varied plumes, and watchful every way
Through the rough stubble turn the secret eye.
Caught in the meshy snare, in vain they beat
Their idle wings, entangled more and more :
Nor on the surges of the boundless air,
Though borne triumphant, are they safe ; the gun,
Glanced just, and sudden, from the fowler's eye,
O'ertakes their sounding pinions ; and again,
Immediate, brings them from the towering wing,
Dead to the ground ; or drives them wide-dispersed
Wounded, and wheeling various, down the wind.

These are not subjects for the peaceful Muse,
Nor will she stain with such her spotless song ;
Then most delighted, when she social sees
The whole mixed animal creation round
Alive and happy. 'Tis not joy to her,

The falsely-cheerful barbarous game of death,
 This rage of pleasure, which the restless youth
 Awakes, impatient, with the gleaming morn :
 When beasts of prey retire, that all night long,
 Urged by necessity, had ranged the dark,
 As if their conscious ravage shunned the light,
 Ashamed. Not so the steady tyrant man,
 Who with the thoughtless insolence of power
 Inflamed, beyond the most infuriate wrath
 Of the worst monster that e'er roamed the waste,
 For sport alone pursues the cruel chase,
 Amid the beamings of the gentle days.
 Upbraid, ye ravening tribes, our wanton rage,
 For hunger kindles you, and lawless want ;
 But lavish fed, in Nature's bounty rolled,
 To joy at anguish, and delight in blood,
 Is what your horrid bosoms never knew.

Poor is the triumph o'er the timid hare !
 Scared from the corn, and now to some lone seat
 Retired : the rushy fen ; the ragged furze,
 Stretched o'er the stony heath ; the stubble chapt ;
 The thistly lawn ; the thick-entangled broom ;
 Of the same friendly hue, the withered fern ;
 The fallow ground laid open to the sun,
 Concoctive ; and the nodding sandy bank,
 Hung o'er the mazes of the mountain brook.
 Vain is her best precaution ; though she sits
 Concealed, with folded ears ; unsleeping eyes,
 By Nature raised to take the horizon in ;
 And head couched close between her hairy feet,
 In act to spring away. The scented dew
 Betrays her early labyrinth ; and deep,
 In scattered sullen openings, far behind,
 With every breeze she hears the coming storm.
 But nearer, and more frequent, as it loads
 The sighing gale, she springs amazed, and all
 The savage soul of game is up at once :
 The pack full-opening, various ; the shrill horn
 Resounded from the hills ; the neighing steed,
 Wild for the chase ; and the loud hunters' shout ;
 O'er a weak, harmless, flying creature, all
 Mixed in mad tumult, and discordant joy.

The stag too, singled from the herd where long
 He ranged the branching monarch of the shades,
 Before the tempest drives. At first in speed
 He, sprightly, puts his faith ; and, roused by fear,
 Gives all his swift aerial soul to flight ;
 Against the breeze he darts, that way the more
 To leave the lessening murderous cry behind :
 Deception short ! though fleetier than the winds
 Blown o'er the keen-aired mountain by the north,
 He bursts the thickets, glances through the glades,
 And plunges deep into the wildest wood ;
 If slow, yet sure, adhesive to the track
 Hot-steaming, up behind him come again
 Th' inhuman rout, and from the shady depth
 Expel him, circling through his every shift.
 He sweeps the forest off ; and sobbing sees
 The glades, mild opening to the golden day ;
 Where, in kind contest, with his butting friends
 He went to struggle, or his loves enjoy.
 Oft in the full descending flood he tries
 To lose the scent, and lave his burning sides :
 Oft seeks the herd ; the watchful herd, alarmed,
 With selfish care avoid a brother's woe.
 What shall he do ? His once so vivid nerves,
 So full of buoyant spirit, now no more
 Inspire the course ; but fainting breathless toil,
 Sick, seizes on his heart : he stands at bay,
 And puts his last weak refuge in despair.

The big round tears run down his dappled face ;
 He groans in anguish ; while the growling pack,
 Blood-happy, hang at his fair jutting chest, [gore.
 And mark his beauteous checkered sides with

Of this enough. But if the sylvan youth,
 Whose fervent blood boils into violence,
 Must have the chase ; behold, despising flight,
 The roused-up lion, resolute, and slow,
 Advancing full on the pretended spear,
 And coward-band, that circling wheel aloof.
 Slunk from the cavern, and the troubled wood,
 See the grim wolf ; on him his shaggy foe
 Vindictive fix, and let the ruffian die :
 Or, growling horrid, as the brindled boar
 Grins fell destruction, to the monster's heart
 Let the dart lighten from the nervous arm.

These Britain knows not ; give, ye Britons, then
 Your sportive fury, pitiless, to pour
 Loose on the nightly robber of the fold ;
 Him, from his craggy winding haunts unearched,
 Let all the thunder of the chase pursue.
 Throw the broad ditch behind you ; o'er the hedge
 High bound, resistless ; nor the deep morass
 Refuse, but through the shaking wilderness
 Pick your nice way ; into the perilous flood
 Bear fearless, of the raging instinct full ;
 And, as you ride the torrent, to the banks
 Your triumph sound sonorous, running round,
 From rock to rock, in circling echoes tossed ;
 Then scale the mountains to their woody tops ;
 Rush down the dangerous steep ; and o'er the lawn,
 In fancy swallowing up the space between,
 Pour all your speed into the rapid game.
 For happy he ! who tops the wheeling chase ;
 Has every maze evolved, and every guile
 Disclosed ; who knows the merits of the pack ;
 Who saw the villain seized, and dying hard,
 Without complaint, though by a hundred mouths
 Relentless torn. O glorious he, beyond
 His daring peers ! when the retreating horn
 Calls them to ghostly halls of grey renown,
 With woodland honours graced ; the fox's fur
 Depending decent from the roof : and spread
 Round the drear walls, with antic figures fierce,
 The stag's large front : he then is loudest heard,
 When the night staggers with severer toils,
 With feasts Thessalian centaurs never knew,
 And their repeated wonders shake the dome.

But first the fuelled chimney blazes wide ;
 The tankards foam ; and the strong table groans
 Beneath the smoking sirloin, stretched immense
 From side to side ; in which, with desperate knife,
 They deep incision make, and talk the while
 Of England's glory, ne'er to be defaced,
 While hence they borrow vigour : or amain
 Into the pasty plunged, at intervals,
 If stomach keen can intervals allow,
 Relating all the glories of the chase.
 Then sated Hunger bids his brother Thirst
 Produce the mighty bowl ; the mighty bowl,
 Swelled high with fiery juice, steams liberal round
 A potent gale, delicious, as the breath
 Of Maia to the love-sick shepherdess,
 On violets diffused, while soft she hears
 Her panting shepherd stealing to her arms.
 Nor wanting is the brown October, drawn,
 Mature and perfect, from his dark retreat
 Of thirty years ; and now his honest front
 Flames in the light refulgent, not afraid
 E'en with the vineyard's best produce to vie.

To cheat the thirsty moments, Whist a while
Walks his dull round beneath a cloud of smoke,
Wreathed, fragrant, from the pipe ; or the quick
In thunder leaping from the box, awake [dice,
The sounding gammon ; while romp-loving miss
Is hauled about, in gallantry robust.

At last, these puling idlenesses laid
Aside, frequent and full, the dry divan
Close in firm circle ; and set, ardent, in
For serious drinking. Nor evasion sly,
Nor sober shift, is to the puking wretch
Indulged apart ; but earnest, brimming bowls
Lave every soul, the table floating round,
And pavement, faithless to the fuddled foot.
Thus as they swim in mutual swill, the talk,
Vociferous at once from twenty tongues,
Reels fast from theme to theme ; from horses,
To church or mistress, politics or ghost, [hounds,
In endless mazes, intricate, perplexed.
Meantime, with sudden interruption, loud,
Th' impatient catch bursts from the joyous heart :
That moment touched is every kindred soul ;
And, opening in a full-mouthed cry of joy,
The laugh, the slap, the jocund curse go round ;
While, from their slumbers shook, the kennelled
Mix in the music of the day again. [hounds

As when the tempest, that has vexed the deep
The dark night long, with fainter murmurs falls,
So gradual sinks their mirth. Their feeble tongues,
Unable to take up the cumbrous word,
Lie quite dissolved. Before their maudlin eyes,
Seen dim and blue, the double tapers dance,
Like the sun wading through the misty sky.
Then, sliding soft, they drop. Confused above,
Glasses and bottles, pipes and gazetteers,
As if the table e'en itself was drunk,
Lie a wet broken scene ; and wide, below,
Is heaped the social slaughter : where astride
The lubber Power in filthy triumph sits,
Slumbrous, inclining still from side to side,
And steeps them drenched in potent sleep till morn.
Perhaps some doctor, of tremendous paunch,
Awful and deep, a black abyss of drink,
Outlives them all ; and from his buried flock
Retiring, full of rumination sad,
Laments the weakness of these latter times.

But if the rougher sex by this fierce sport
Is hurried wild, let not such horrid joy
E'er stain the bosom of the British fair.
Far be the spirit of the chase from them !
Uncomey courage, unbecoming skill ;
To spring the fence, to rein the prancing steed ;
The cap, the whip, the masculine attire,
In which they roughen to the sense, and all
The winning softness of their sex is lost.
In them 'tis graceful to dissolve at woe ;
With every motion, every word, to wave
Quick o'er the kindling cheek the ready blush ;
And from the smallest violence to shrink
Unequal, then the loveliest in their fears ;
And by this silent adulation, soft,
To their protection more engaging man.
O may their eyes no miserable sight,
Save weeping lovers, see ! a nobler game,
Through love's enchanting wiles pursued, yet fled,
In chase ambiguous. May their tender limbs
Float in the loose simplicity of dress !
And, fashioned all to harmony, alone
Know they to seize the captivated soul,
In rapture warbled from love-breathing lips ;

To teach the lute to languish ; with smooth step,
Disclosing motion in its every charm,
To swim along, and swell the mazy dance ;
To train the foliage o'er the snowy lawn ;
To guide the pencil, turn the tuneful page ;
To lend new flavour to the fruitful year,
And heighten Nature's dainties ; in their race
To rear their graces into second life ;
To give society its highest taste ;
Well-ordered-home man's best delight to make ;
And by submissive wisdom, modest skill,
With every gentle care-eluding art,
To raise the virtues, animate the bliss,
And sweeten all the toils of human life :
This be the female dignity and praise.

Ye swains, now hasten to the hazel bank,
Where, down yon dale, the wildly-winding brook
Falls hoarse from steep to steep. In close array,
Fit for the thickets and the tangling shrub,
Ye virgins, come. For you their latest song
The woodlands raise ; the clustering nuts for you
The lover finds amid the secret shade ;
And, where they burnish on the topmost bough,
With active vigour crushes down the tree ;
Or shakes them ripe from the resigning husk,
A glossy shower, and of an ardent brown,
As are the ringlets of Melinda's hair :
Melinda ! formed with every grace complete ;
Yet these neglecting, above beauty wise,
And far transcending such a vulgar praise.

Hence from the joy-resounding fields,
In cheerful error, let us tread the maze
Of Autumn, unconfined ; and taste, revived,
The breath of orchard big with bending fruit ;
Obedient to the breeze and beating ray,
From the deep-loaded bough a mellow shower
Incessant melts away. The juicy pear
Lies, in a soft profusion scattered round.
A various sweetness swells the gentle race,
By Nature's all-refining hand prepared ;
Of tempered sun, and water, earth, and air,
In ever-changing composition mixed.
Such, falling frequent through the chiller night,
The fragrant stores, the wide-projected heaps
Of apples, which the lusty-handed Year,
Innumerable, o'er the blushing orchard shakes.
A various spirit, fresh, delicious, keen,
Dwells in their gelid pores ; and, active, points
The piercing cider for the thirsty tongue :
Thy native theme, and boon inspirer too,
Philips, Pomona's bard, the second thou
Who nobly durst, in rhyme-unfettered verse,
With British freedom sing the British song :
How, from Silurian vats, high-sparkling wines
Foam in transparent floods ; some strong, to cheer
The wintry revels of the labouring hind ;
And tasteful some, to cool the summer hours.

In this glad season, while his sweetest beams
The sun sheds equal o'er the meekened day,
Oh lose me in the green delightful walks
Of, Dodington, thy seat, serene and plain ;
Where simple Nature reigns ; and every view,
Diffusive, spreads the pure Dorsetian downs,
In boundless prospect ; yonder shagged with wood,
Here rich with harvest, and there white with flocks !
Meantime the grandeur of thy lofty dome,
Far-splendid, seizes on the ravished eye.
New beauties rise with each revolving day ;
New columns swell ; and still the fresh Spring finds
New plants to quicken, and new groves to green.

Full of thy genius all! the Muses' seat:
Where in the secret bower, and winding walk,
For virtuous Young and thee they twine the bay.
Here wandering oft, fired with the restless thirst
Of thy applause, I solitary court
The inspiring breeze, and meditate the book
Of Nature, ever open; aiming thence,
Warm from the heart, to learn the moral song.
Here, as I steal along the sunny wall
Where Autumn basks, with fruit empurpled deep,
My pleasing theme continual prompts my thought:
Presents the downy peach, the shining plum,
The ruddy fragrant nectarine, and, dark
Beneath his ample leaf, the luscious fig.
The vine too here her curling tendrils shoots,
Hangs out her clusters, glowing to the south,
And scarcely wishes for a warmer sky.

Turn we a moment Fancy's rapid flight
To vigorous soils, and climes of fair extent;
Where, by the potent sun elated high,
The vineyard swells refulgent on the day,
Spreads o'er the vale, or up the mountain climbs,
Profuse, and drinks amid the sunny rocks,
From cliff to cliff increased, the heightened blaze.
Low bend the weighty boughs. The clusters clear,
Half through the foliage seen, or ardent flame,
Or shine transparent; while perfection breathes
White o'er the turgent film the living dew.
As thus they brighten with exalted juice,
Touched into flavour by the mingling ray;
The rural youth and virgins o'er the field,
Each fond for each to cull the autumnal prime,
Exulting rove, and speak the vintage night.
Then comes the crushing swain; the country floats,
And foams unbounded with the mashy flood;
That by degrees fermented, and refined,
Round the raised nations pours the cup of joy;
The claret smooth, red as the lip we press
In sparkling fancy, while we drain the bowl;
The mellow-tasted Burgundy; and, quick
As is the wit it gives, the grey Champagne.

Now, by the cool declining year condensed,
Descend the copious exhalations, checked
As up the middle sky unseen they stole,
And roll the doubling fogs around the hill.
No more the mountain, horrid, vast, sublime,
Which pours a sweep of rivers from its sides,
And high between contending kingdoms rears
The rocky long division, fills the view
With great variety; but, in a night
Of gathering vapour, from the baffled sense
Sinks dark and dreary. Thence expanding far,
The huge dusk, gradual, swallows up the plain:
Vanish the woods; the dim-seen river seems
Sullen, and slow, to roll the misty wave.
E'en in the height of noon oppressed, the sun
Sheds weak, and blunt, his wide-refracted ray:
Whence glaring oft, with many a broadened orb,
He frights the nations. Indistinct on earth,
Seen through the turbid air, beyond the life
Objects appear; and, 'wildered, o'er the waste
The shepherd stalks gigantic. Till at last
Wreathed dun around, in deeper circles still
Successive closing, sits the general fog
Unbounded o'er the world; and, mingling thick,
A formless grey confusion covers all.
As when of old (so sung the Hebrew Bard)
Light, uncollected, through the chaos urged
Its infant way; nor Order yet had drawn
His lovely train from out the dubious gloom.

These roving mists, that constant now begin
To smoke along the hilly country, these
With weightier rains, and melted Alpine snows,
The mountain-cisterns fill, those ample stores
Of water, scooped among the hollow rocks;
Whence gush the streams, the ceaseless fountains
play,
And their unfailing wealth the rivers draw.
Some sages say, that, where the numerous wave
For ever lashes the resounding shore,
Drilled through the sandy stratum, every way,
The waters with the sandy stratum rise;
Amid whose angles, infinitely strained,
They joyful leave their jaggy salts behind,
And clear and sweeten as they soak along.
Nor stops the restless fluid, mounting still,
Though oft amidst the irriguous vale it springs;
But to the mountain courted by the sand,
That leads it darkling on in faithful maze,
Far from the parent-main, it boils again
Fresh into day, and all the glittering hill
Is bright with spouting rills. But hence this vain
Amusive dream! why should the waters love
To take so far a journey to the hills,
When the sweet valleys offer to their toil
Inviting quiet, and a nearer bed?
Or if, by blind ambition led astray,
They must aspire, why should they sudden stop
Among the broken mountain's rushy dells,
And, ere they gain its highest peak, desert
The attractive sand that charmed their course so
Besides, the hard agglomerating salts, [long!
The spoil of ages, would impervious choke
Their secret channels; or, by slow degrees,
High as the hills protrude the swelling vales:
Old Ocean too, sucked through the porous globe,
Had long ere now forsook his horrid bed,
And brought Deucalion's watery times again.

Say, then, where lurk the vast eternal springs
That, like creating Nature lie concealed
From mortal eye, yet with their lavish stores
Refresh the globe, and all its joyous tribes!
O thou pervading Genius, given to man,
To trace the secrets of the dark abyss,
O lay the mountains bare! and wide display
Their hidden structure to the astonished view!
Strip from the branching Alps their piny load;
The huge incumbrance of horrid woods
From Asian Taurus, from Imaus stretched
Athwart the roving Tartar's sullen bounds!
Give opening Hemus to my searching eye,
And high Olympus pouring many a stream;
O from the sounding summits of the north,
The Dofrine Hills, through Scandinavia rolled
To farthest Lapland and the frozen main;
From lofty Caucasus, far seen by those
Who in the Caspian and black Euxine toil;
From cold Rhiphean rocks, which the wild Russ
Believes the stony girdle of the world*;
And all the dreadful mountains, wrapt in storm,
Whence wide Siberia draws her lonely floods;
O sweep the eternal snows! Hung o'er the deep,
That ever works beneath his sounding base,
Bid Atlas, propping heaven, as poets feign,
His subterranean wonders spread! Unveil
The miny caverns, blazing on the day,
Of Abyssinia's cloud-compelling cliffs,

* The Museovites call the Rhiphean Mountains *Weliki Camenypops*, that is, the *Great Stony Girdle*; because they suppose them to encompass the whole earth.

And of the bending Mountains of the Moon*!
O'ertopping all these giant-sons of earth,
Let the dire Andes, from the radiant line
Stretched to the stormy seas that thunder round
The southern pole, their hideous deeps unfold!

Amazing scene! Behold! the glooms disclose,
I see the rivers in their infant beds!
Deep, deep, I hear them, labouring to get free;
I see the leaning strata, artful ranged;
The gaping fissures to receive the rains,
The melting snows, and ever-dripping fogs.
Strowed bibulous above I see the sands,
The pebbly gravel next, the layers then
Of mingled moulds, of more retentive earths
The guttered rocks and mazy-running clefts;
That, while the stealing moisture they transmit,
Retard its motion, and forbid its waste.
Beneath th' incessant weeping of these drains,
I see the rocky siphons stretched immense,
The mighty reservoirs, of hardened chalk,
Or stiff-compacted clay, capacious formed.
O'erflowing thence, the congregated stores,
The crystal treasures of the liquid world,
Through the stirred sands a bubbling passage burst;
And welling out, around the middle steep,
Or from the bottoms of the bosomed hills,
In pure effusion flow. United, thus,
Th' exhaling sun, the vapour-burdened air,
The gelid mountains, that to rain condensed
These vapours in continual current draw,
And send them, o'er the fair-divided earth,
In bounteous rivers to the deep again,
A social commerce hold, and firm support
The full-adjusted harmony of things.

When Autumn scatters his departing gleams,
Warned of approaching Winter, gathered, play
The swallow-people; and tossed wide around,
O'er the calm sky, in convulsion swift,
The feathered eddy floats; rejoicing once,
Ere to their wintry slumbers they retire;
In clusters clung, beneath the mouldering bank,
And where, unpierced by frost, the cavern sweats.
Or rather into warmer climes conveyed,
With other kindred birds of season, there
They twitter cheerful, till the vernal months
Invite them welcome back: for, thronging, now
Innumerable wings are in commotion all.

Where the Rhine loses his majestic force
In Belgian plains, won from the raging deep,
By diligence amazing, and the strong
Unconquerable hand of Liberty,
The stork-assembly meets; for many a day,
Consulting deep, and various, ere they take
Their arduous voyage through the liquid sky:
And now their route designed, their leaders chose,
Their tribes adjusted, cleaned their vigorous wings;
And many a circle, many a short essay,
Wheeled round and round, in congregation full
The figured flight ascends; and riding high
The aerial billows, mixes with the clouds.

Or where the Northern Ocean, in vast whirls,
Boils round the naked melancholy isles
Of farthest Thulé, and the Atlantic surge
Pours in among the stormy Hebrides;
Who can recount what transmigrations there
Are annual made? what nations come and go?
And how the living clouds on clouds arise?
Infinite wings! till all the plume-dark air

* A range of mountains in Africa, that surround almost all Monomotapa.

And rude-resounding shore are one wild cry.

Here the plain harmless native his small flock,
And herd diminutive of many hues,
Tends on the little island's verdant swell,
The shepherd's sea-girt reign; or to the rocks
Dire-clinging, gathers his ovarious food;
Or sweeps the fishy shore; or treasures up
The plumage, rising full, to form the bed
Of luxury. And here awhile the Muse,
High hovering o'er the broad cerulean scene,
Sees Caledonia, in romantic view:
Her airy mountains, from the waving main,
Invested with a keen diffusive sky,
Breathing the soul acute; her forests large,
Incult, robust, and tall, by Nature's hand
Planted of old; her azure lakes between,
Poured out extensive, and of watery wealth
Full; winding deep, and green, her fertile valleys;
With many a cool translucent brimming flood
Washed lovely, from the Tweed (pure parent stream,
Whose pastoral banks first heard my Doric reed,
With, sylvan Jed, thy tributary brook)
To where the north-inflated tempest foams
O'er Orca's or Betubium's highest peak:
Nurse of a people, in Misfortune's school
Trained up to hardy deeds; soon visited
By Learning, when before the Gothic rage
She took her western flight. A manly race,
Of unsubmitting spirit, wise, and brave;
Who still through bleeding ages struggled hard
(As well unhappy Wallace can attest,
Great patriot hero! ill-required chief!)
To hold a generous undiminished state;
Too much in vain! Hence of unequal bounds
Impatient, and by tempting glory borne
O'er every land, for every land their life
Has flowed profuse, their piercing genius planned,
And swelled the pomp of peace their faithful toil.
As from their own clear north, in radiant streams,
Bright over Europe bursts the Boreal morn.

Oh! is there not some patriot, in whose power
That best, that god-like luxury is placed,
Of blessing thousands, thousands yet unborn,
Through late posterity? some, large of soul,
To cheer dejected industry? to give
A double harvest to the pining swain,
And teach the labouring hand the sweets of toil?
How, by the finest art, the native robe
To weave; how, white as hyperborean snow,
To form the lucid lawn; with venturous oar
How to dash wide the billow; nor look on,
Shamefully passive, while Batavian fleets
Defraud us of the glittering finny swarms,
That heave our friths, and crowd upon our shores;
How all-enlivening trade to rouse, and wing
The prosperous sail, from every growing port,
Uninjured, round the sea-encircled globe;
And thus, in soul united as in name,
Bid Britain reign the mistress of the deep?

Yes, there are such. And, full on thee, Argyle,
Her hope, her stay, her darling, and her boast,
From her first patriots and her heroes sprung,
Thy fond imploring country turns her eye;
In thee, with all a mother's triumph, sees
Her every virtue, every grace combined,
Her genius, wisdom, her engaging turn,
Her pride of honour, and her courage tried,
Calm, and intrepid in the very throat
Of sulphurous war, on Tenier's dreadful field.
Nor less the palm of peace inwreathes thy brow:

For, powerful as thy sword, from thy rich tongue
Persuasion flows, and wins the high debate ;
While mixed in thee combine the charm of youth,
The force of manhood, and the depth of age.
Thee, Forbes, too, whom every worth attends,
As truth sincere, as weeping friendship kind,
Thee, truly generous, and in silence great,
Thy country feels through her reviving arts
Planned by thy wisdom, by thy soul informed ;
And seldom has she known a friend like thee.

But see the fading many-coloured woods,
Shade deepening over shade, the country round
Imbrown, a crowded umbrage, dusk, and dun,
Of every hue, from wan declining green
To sooty dark. These now the lonesome Muse,
Low-whispering, lead into their leaf-strown walks,
And give the Season in its latest view.

Meantime, light shadowing all, a sober calm
Fleeces unbounded ether ; whose least wave
Stands tremulous, uncertain where to turn
The gentle current ; while, illumined wide,
The dewy-skirted clouds imbibe the sun,
And through their lucid veil his softened force
Shed o'er the peaceful world. Then is the time,
For those whom Wisdom and whom Nature charm,
To steal themselves from the degenerate crowd,
And soar above this little scene of things ;
To tread low-thoughted Vice beneath their feet ;
To soothe the throbbing passions into peace ;
And woo lone Quiet in her silent walks.

Thus solitary, and in pensive guise,
Oft let me wander o'er the russet mead, [heard
And through the saddened grove, where scarce is
One dying strain, to cheer the woodman's toil.
Haply some widowed songster pours his plaint,
Far, in faint warblings, through the tawny copse ;
While congregated thrushes, linnets, larks,
And each wild throat, whose artless strains so late
Swelled all the music of the swarming shades,
Robbed of their tuneful souls, now shivering sit
On the dead tree, a dull despondent flock ;
With not a brightness waving o'er their plumes,
And nought save chattering discord in their note.
O ! let not, aimed from some inhuman eye,
The gun the music of the coming year
Destroy ; and harmless, unsuspecting harm,
Lay the weak tribes a miserable prey,
In mingled murder, fluttering on the ground !

The pale descending year, yet pleasing still,
A gentler mood inspires ; for now the leaf
Incessant rustles from the mournful grove ;
Oft startling such as, studious, walk below,
And slowly circles through the waving air.
But should a quicker breeze amid the boughs
Sob, o'er the sky the leafy deluge streams ;
Till choked and matted with the dreary shower,
The forest walks, at every rising gale,
Roll wide the withered waste, and whistle bleak.
Fled is the blasted verdure of the fields ;
And, shrunk into their beds, the flowery race
Their sunny robes resign. E'en what remained
Of stronger fruits falls from the naked tree ;
And woods, fields, gardens, orchards, all around
The desolated prospect thrills the soul.

He comes ! he comes ! in every breeze the Power
Of Philosophic Melancholy comes !
His near approach the sudden starting tear,
The glowing cheek, the mild dejected air,
The softened feature, and the beating heart,
Pierced deep with many a virtuous pang, declare.

O'er all the soul his sacred influence breathes !
Inflames imagination ; through the breast
Infuses every tenderness ; and far
Beyond dim earth exalts the swelling thought.
Ten thousand thousand fleet ideas, such
As never mingled with the vulgar dream,
Crowd fast into the mind's creative eye.
As fast the correspondent passions rise,
As varied, and as high : Devotion raised
To rapture, and divine astonishment ;
The love of Nature unconfined, and, chief,
Of human race ; the large ambitious wish
To make them blest ; the sigh for suffering worth
Lost in obscurity ; the noble scorn
Of tyrant-pride ; the fearless great resolve ;
The wonder which the dying patriot draws,
Inspiring glory through remotest time ;
Th' awakened throb for virtue, and for fame ;
The sympathies of love, and friendship dear ;
With all the social offspring of the heart.

Oh ! bear me then to vast embowering shades,
To twilight groves, and visionary vales ;
To weeping grottoes, and prophetic glooms ;
Where angel forms athwart the solemn dusk
Tremendous sweep, or seem to sweep along ;
And voices more than human, through the void
Deep-sounding, seize th' enthusiastic ear !

Or is this gloom too much ? Then lead, ye powers,
That o'er the garden and the rural seat
Preside, which shining through the cheerful land
In countless numbers blest Britannia sees ;
O, lead me to the wide-extended walks,
The fair majestic paradise of Stowe* !
Not Persian Cyrus on Ionia's shore
E'er saw such sylvan scenes ; such various art
By genius fired, such ardent genius tamed
By cool judicious art ; that, in the strife,
All beauteous Nature fears to be outdone.
And there, O Pitt, thy country's early boast,
There let me sit beneath the sheltered slopes,
Or in that Temple† where, in future times,
Thou well shalt merit a distinguished name ;
And, with thy converse blest, catch the last smiles
Of Autumn beaming o'er the yellow woods.
While there with thee th' enchanted round I walk,
The regulated wild, gay Fancy then
Will tread in thought the groves of Attic land ;
Will from thy standard taste refine her own,
Correct thy pencil to the purest truth
Of Nature, or, the unimpassioned shades
Forsaking, raise it to the human mind.
Or if hereafter she, with juster hand,
Shall draw the tragic scene, instruct her, thou,
To mark the varied movements of the heart,
What every decent character requires,
And every passion speaks : O ! through her strain
Breathe thy pathetic eloquence, that moulds
Th' attentive senate, charms, persuades, exalts,
Of honest Zeal th' indignant lightning throws,
And shakes Corruption on her venal throne !
While thus we talk, and through Elysian vales
Delighted rove, perhaps a sigh escapes :
What pity, Cobham, thou thy verdant files
Of ordered trees shouldst here inglorious range,
Instead of squadrons flaming o'er the field,
And long embattled hosts ! when the proud foe,
The faithless vain disturber of mankind,
Insulting Gail has roused the world to war ;

* The seat of Lord Cobham.

† The Temple of Virtue in Stowe Gardens.

When keen, once more, within their bounds to press
Those polished robbers, those ambitious slaves,
The British youth would hail thy wise command,
Thy tempered ardour and thy veteran skill.

The western sun withdraws the shortened day ;
And humid Evening, gliding o'er the sky,
In her chill progress, to the ground condensed
The vapours throws. Where creeping waters ooze,
Where marshes stagnate, and where rivers wind,
Cluster the rolling fogs, and swim along
The dusky-mantled lawn. Meanwhile the Moon,
Full-orbed, and breaking through the scattered
Shows her broad visage in the crimson'd east. [clouds,
Turned to the sun direct, her spotted disk,
Where mountains rise, umbrageous dales descend,
And caverns deep, as optic tube describes,
A smaller earth, gives us his blaze again,
Void of its flame, and sheds a softer day.
Now through the passing cloud she seems to stoop,
Now up the pure cerulean rides sublime.
Wide the pale deluge floats, and streaming mild
O'er the skyed mountain to the shadowy vale,
While rocks and floods reflect the quivering gleam,
The whole air whitens with a boundless tide
Of silver radiance, trembling round the world.

But when half blotted from the sky her light,
Fainting, permits the starry fires to burn
With keener lustre through the depth of heaven ;
Or near extinct her deadened orb appears,
And scarce appears, of sickly beamless white ;
Oft in this season, silent from the north
A blaze of meteors shoots : ensweeping first
The lower skies, they all at once converge
High to the crown of heaven, and all at once
Relapsing quick, as quickly reascend,
And mix, and thwart, extinguish and renew,
All ether coursing in a maze of light.
From look to look, contagious through the crowd,
The panic runs, and into wondrous shapes
Th' appearance throws : armies in meet array,
Thronged with aerial spears, and steeds of fire ;
Till, the long lines of full-extended war
In bleeding fight commixed, the sanguine flood
Rolls a broad slaughter o'er the plains of heaven.
As thus they scan the visionary scene,
On all sides swells the superstitious din,
Incontinent ; and busy Frenzy talks
Of blood and battle ; cities overturned,
And late at night in swallowing earthquake sunk,
Or hideous wrapt in fierce ascending flame ;
Of fallow famine, inundation, storm ;
Of pestilence, and every great distress ;
Empires subversed, when ruling fate has struck
The unalterable hour : e'en Nature's self
Is deemed to totter on the brink of time.
Not so the man of philosophic eye,
And inspect sage ; the waving brightness he
Curious surveys, inquisitive to know
The causes, and materials, yet unfixed,
Of this appearance beautiful and new.

Now black, and deep, the night begins to fall,
A shade immense ! Sunk in the quenching gloom,
Magnificent and vast, are heaven and earth.
Order confounded lies ; all beauty void ;
Distinction lost ; and gay variety
One universal blot : such the fair power
Of light, to kindle and create the whole.
Drear is the state of the benighted wretch,
Who then, bewildered, wanders through the dark,
Full of pale fancies, and chimeras huge ;

Nor visited by one directive ray,
From cottage streaming, or from airy hall.
Perhaps impatient as he stumbles on,
Struck from the root of slimy rushes, blue,
The wildfire scatters round, or gathered trails
A length of flame deceitful o'er the moss :
Whither decoyed by the fantastic blaze,
Now lost and now renewed, he sinks absorbed,
Rider and horse, amid the miry gulf :
While still, from day to day, his pining wife
And plaintive children his return await,
In wild conjecture lost. At other times,
Sent by the better Genius of the night,
Innoxious, gleaming on the horse's mane,
The meteor sits ; and shows the narrow path,
That winding leads through pits of death, or else
Instructs him how to take the dangerous ford.

The lengthened night elapsed, the Morning shines
Serene, in all her dewy beauty bright,
Unfolding fair the last autumnal day.
And now the mounting sun dispels the fog ;
The rigid hoar-frost melts before his beam ;
And hung on every spray, on every blade
Of grass, the myriad dew-drops twinkle round.

Ah, see where, robbed and murdered, in that pit
Lies the still heaving hive ! at evening snatched,
Beneath the cloud of guilt-concealing night,
And fixed o'er sulphur ; while, not dreaming ill,
The happy people, in their waxen cells,
Sat tending public cares, and planning schemes
Of temperance, for Winter poor ; rejoiced
To mark, full flowing round, their copious stores.
Sudden the dark oppressive steam ascends ;
And, used to milder scents, the tender race,
By thousands, tumble from their honeyed domes,
Convolved, and agonizing in the dust.
And was it then for this you roamed the Spring,
Intent from flower to flower ? for this you toiled
Ceaseless the burning Summer-heats away ?
For this in Autumn searched the blooming waste,
Nor lost one sunny gleam ? for this sad fate ?
O man ! tyrannic lord ! how long, how long
Shall prostrate Nature groan beneath your rage,
Awaiting renovation ?—When obliged,
Must you destroy ? of their ambrosial food
Can you not borrow ; and, in just return,
Afford them shelter from the wintry winds ?
Or, as the sharp year pinches, with their own
Again regale them on some smiling day ?
See where the stony bottom of their town
Looks desolate, and wild ; with here and there
A helpless number, who the ruined state
Survive, lamenting weak, cast out to death.
Thus a proud city, populous and rich,
Full of the works of peace, and high in joy,
At theatre or feast, or sunk in sleep,
(As late, Palermo, was thy fate) is seized
By some dread earthquake, and convulsive hurled
Sheer from the black foundation, stench-involved,
Into a gulf of blue sulphureous flame.

Hence every harsher sight ! for now the day,
O'er heaven and earth diffused, grows warm, and
Infinite splendour ! wide investing all. [high ;
How still the breeze ! save what the filmy thread
Of dew evaporate brushes from the plain.
How clear the cloudless sky ! how deeply tinged
With a peculiar blue ! the ethereal arch
How swelled immense ! amid whose azure throned,
The radiant sun how gay ! how calm below
The gilded earth ! the harvest-treasures all

Now gathered in, beyond the rage of storms,
 Sure to the swain ; the circling fence shut up ;
 And instant Winter's utmost rage defied ;
 While, loose to festive joy, the country round
 Laughs with the loud sincerity of mirth,
 Shook to the wind their cares. The toil-strung
 By the quick sense of music taught alone, [youth,
 Leaps wildly graceful in the lively dance.
 Her every charm abroad, the village-toast,
 Young, buxom, warm, in native beauty rich,
 Darts not unmeaning looks ; and, where her eye
 Points an approving smile, with double force
 The cudgel rattles, and the wrestler twines.
 Age too shines out ; and, garrulous, recounts
 The feats of youth. Thus they rejoice ; nor think
 That, with to-morrow's sun, their annual toil
 Begins again the never-ceasing round.

Oh, knew he but his happiness, of men
 The happiest he ! who far from public rage,
 Deep in the vale, with a choice few retired,
 Drinks the pure pleasures of the rural life. [gate,
 What though the dome be wanting, whose proud
 Each morning, vomits out the sneaking crowd
 Of flatterers false, and in their turn abused ?
 Vile intercourse ! What though the glittering robe,
 Of every hue reflected light can give,
 Or floating loose, or stiff with mazy gold,
 The pride and gaze of fools, oppress him not ?
 What though, from utmost land and sea purveyed,
 For him each rarer tributary life
 Bleeds not, and his insatiate table heaps
 With luxury and death ? What though his bowl
 Flames not with costly juice ; nor sunk in beds,
 Off of gay care, he tosses out the night,
 Or melts the thoughtless hours in idle state ?
 What though he knows not those fantastic joys
 That still amuse the wanton, still deceive ;
 A face of pleasure, but a heart of pain ;
 Their hollow moments undelighted all ?
 Sure peace is his ; a solid life, estranged
 To disappointment, and fallacious hope :
 Rich in content, in Nature's bounty rich,
 In herbs and fruits ; whatever greens the Spring,
 When heaven descends in showers ; or bends the
 bough,

When Summer reddens, and when Autumn beams ;
 Or in the wintry glebe whatever lies
 Concealed, and fattens with the richest sap :
 These are not wanting ; nor the milky drove,
 Luxuriant, spread o'er all the lowing vale ;
 Nor bleating mountains ; nor the chide of streams,
 And hum of bees, inviting sleep sincere
 Into the guiltless breast, beneath the shade,
 Or thrown at large amid the fragrant hay ;
 Nor aught besides of prospect, grove, or song,
 Dim grottoes, gleaming lakes, and fountain clear.
 Here too dwells simple Truth ; plain Innocence ;
 Unsullied Beauty ; sound unbroken Youth,
 Patient of labour, with a little pleased ;
 Health ever blooming ; unambitious Toil ;
 Calm Contemplation, and poetic Ease.

Let others brave the flood in quest of gain,
 And beat, for joyless months, the gloomy wave.
 Let such as deem it glory to destroy,
 Rush into blood, the sack of cities seek ;
 Unpierced, exulting in the widow's wail,
 The virgin's shriek, and infant's trembling cry.
 Let some, far-distant from their native soil,
 Urged or by want or hardened avarice,
 Find other lands beneath another sun.

Let this through cities work his eager way,
 By legal outrage and established guile,
 The social sense extinct ; and that ferment
 Mad into tumult the seditious herd,
 Or melt them down to slavery. Let these
 Ensnare the wretched in the toils of law,
 Fomenting discord, and perplexing right,
 An iron race ! and those of fairer front,
 But equal inhumanity, in courts,
 Delusive pomp and dark cabals, delight ;
 Wreath the deep bow, diffuse the lying smile,
 And tread the weary labyrinth of state.
 While he, from all the stormy passions free
 That restless men involve, hears, and but hears,
 At distance safe, the human tempest roar,
 Wrapped close in conscious peace. The fall of kings,
 The rage of nations, and the crush of states,
 Move not the man, who, from the world escaped,
 In still retreats and flowery solitudes,
 To Nature's voice attends, from month to month,
 And day to day, through the revolving year ;
 Admiring, sees her in her every shape ;
 Feels all her sweet emotions at his heart ;
 Takes what she liberal gives, nor thinks of more.
 He, when young Spring protrudes the bursting
 germs,

Marks the first bud, and sucks the healthful gale
 Into his freshened soul ; her genial hours
 He full enjoys ; and not a beauty blows,
 And not an opening blossom breathes in vain.
 In Summer he, beneath the living shade,
 Such as o'er frigid Tempè went to wave,
 Or Hemus cool, reads what the Muse, of these,
 Perhaps, has in immortal numbers sung ;
 Or what she dictates writes : and, oft an eye
 Shot round, rejoices in the vigorous year.

When Autumn's yellow lustre gilds the world,
 And tempts the sickled swain into the field,
 Seized by the general joy, his heart distends
 With gentle throes ; and, through the tepid gleams
 Deep musing, then he best exerts his song.
 E'en Winter wild to him is full of bliss.
 The mighty tempest, and the hoary waste,
 Abrupt and deep, stretched o'er the buried earth,
 Awake to solemn thought. At night the skies,
 Disclosed, and kindled, by refining frost,
 Pour every lustre on th' exalted eye.
 A friend, a book, the stealing hours secure, [wing
 And mark them down for wisdom. With swift
 O'er land and sea imagination roams ;
 Or truth, divinely breaking on his mind,
 Elates his being, and unfolds his powers ;
 Or in his breast heroic virtue burns.
 The touch of kindred too and love he feels ;
 The modest eye, whose beams on his alone
 Ecstatic shine ; the little strong embrace
 Of prattling children, twined around his neck,
 And emulous to please him, calling forth
 The fond parental soul. Nor purpose gay,
 Amusement, dance, or song, he sternly scorns ;
 For happiness and true philosophy
 Are of the social, still, and smiling kind.
 This is the life which those who fret in guilt,
 And guilty cities, never knew ; the life
 Led by primeval ages, uncorrupt,
 When angels dwelt, and God himself, with man !

Oh Nature ! all-sufficient ! over all !
 Enrich me with the knowledge of thy works ;
 Snatch me to heaven ; thy rolling wonders there,
 World beyond world, in infinite extent,

Profusely scattered o'er the blue immense,
 Show me ; their motions, periods, and their laws,
 Give me to scan ; through the disclosing deep
 Light my blind way : the mineral strata there ;
 Thrust blooming, thence the vegetable world ;
 O'er that the rising system, more complex,
 Of animals ; and, higher still, the mind,
 The varied scene of quick-compounded thought,
 And where the mixing passions endless shift ;
 These ever open to my ravished eye ;
 A search, the flight of time can ne'er exhaust !
 But if to that unequal,—if the blood,
 In sluggish streams about my heart, forbid
 That best ambition,—under closing shades,
 Inglorious, lay me by the lowly brook,
 And whisper to my dreams. From Thee begin,
 Dwell all on Thee, with Thee conclude my song ;
 And let me never, never stray from Thee !

WINTER.

ARGUMENT.

The subject proposed. Address to the Earl of Wilmington. First approach of Winter. According to the natural course of the season, various storms described. Rain. Wind. Snow. The driving of the snows ; a man perishing among them ; whence reflections on the wants and miseries of human life. The wolves descending from the Alps and Apennines. A winter-evening described ; as spent by philosophers ; by the country people ; in the city. Frost. A view of winter within the polar circle. A thaw. The whole concluding with moral reflections on a future state.

SEE, Winter comes, to rule the varied year,
 Sullen and sad, with all his rising train, [themselves,
 Vapours, and clouds, and storms. Be these my
 These ! that exalt the soul to solemn thought,
 And heavenly musing. Welcome, kindred glooms !
 Congenial horrors, hail ! with frequent foot,
 Pleased have I, in my cheerful morn of life,
 When nursed by careless Solitude I lived,
 And sung of Nature with unceasing joy, [domain ;
 Pleased have I wandered through your rough
 Trod the pure virgin-snows, myself as pure ;
 Heard the winds roar, and the big torrent burst ;
 Or seen the deep-fermenting tempest brewed
 In the grim evening sky. Thus passed the time,
 Till through the lucid chambers of the south
 Looked out the joyous Spring, looked out, and smiled.

To thee, the patron of her first essay,
 The Muse, O Wilmington ! renews her song.
 Since has she rounded the revolving year :
 Skimmed the gay Spring ; on eagle-pinions borne,
 Attempted through the Summer-blaze to rise ;
 Then swept o'er Autumn with the shadowy gale ;
 And now among the wintry clouds again,
 Rolled in the doubling storm, she tries to soar ;
 To swell her note with all the rushing winds ;
 To suit her sounding cadence to the floods ;
 As is her theme, her numbers wildly great :
 Thrice happy could she fill thy judging ear
 With bold description, and with manly thought.
 Nor art thou skilled in awful schemes alone,
 And how to make a mighty people thrive ;
 But equal goodness, sound integrity,
 A firm, unshaken, uncorrupted soul
 Amid a sliding age, and burning strong,
 Not vainly blazing, for thy country's weal,
 A steady spirit regularly free ;

These, each exalting each, the statesman light
 Into the patriot ; these, the public hope
 And eye to thee converting, bid the Muse
 Record what Envy dares not flattery call.
 Now when the cheerless empire of the sky
 To Capricorn the Centaur Archer yields,
 And fierce Aquarius stains th' inverted year ;
 Hung o'er the furthest verge of heaven, the sun
 Scarce spreads through ether the dejected day.
 Faint are his gleams, and ineffectual shoot
 His struggling rays, in horizontal lines,
 Through the thick air ; as clothed in cloudy storm,
 Weak, wan, and broad, he skirts the southern sky ;
 And, soon descending, to the long dark night,
 Wide-shading all, the prostrate world resigns.
 Nor is the night unwished ; while vital heat,
 Light, life, and joy, the dubious day forsake.
 Meantime, in sable cincture, shadows vast,
 Deep-tinged and damp, and congregated clouds,
 And all the vapoury turbulence of heaven,
 Involve the face of things. Thus Winter falls,
 A heavy gloom oppressive o'er the world,
 Through Nature shedding influence malign,
 And rouses up the seeds of dark disease,
 The soul of man dies in him, loathing life,
 And black with more than melancholy views.
 The cattle droop ; and o'er the furrowed land,
 Fresh from the plough, the dun discoloured flocks,
 Untended spreading, crop the wholesome root.
 Along the woods, along the moorish fens,
 Sighs the sad Genius of the coming storm ;
 And up among the loose disjointed cliffs,
 And fractured mountains wild, the brawling brook
 And cave, presageful, send a hollow moan,
 Resounding long in listening Fancy's ear.

Then comes the father of the tempest forth,
 Wrapt in black glooms. First joyless rains obscure,
 Drive through the mingling skies with vapour foul ;
 Dash on the mountain's brow, and shake the woods,
 That grumbling wave below. Th' unsightly plain
 Lies a brown deluge ; as the low-bent clouds
 Pour flood on flood, yet, unexhausted, still
 Combine, and deepening into night shut up
 The day's fair face. The wanderers of heaven,
 Each to his home, retire ; save those that love
 To take their pastime in the troubled air,
 Or skimming flutter round the dimply pool.
 The cattle from th' untasted fields return,
 And ask, with meaning low, their wonted stalls,
 Or ruminant in the contiguous shade.
 Thither the household feathery people crowd,
 The crested cock, with all his female train,
 Pensive, and dripping ; while the cottage hind
 Hangs o'er th' enlivening blaze, and taleful there
 Recounts his simple frolic : much he talks,
 And much he laughs, nor recks the storm that blows
 Without, and rattles on his humble roof.

Wide o'er the brim, with many a torrent swelled,
 And the mixed ruin of its banks o'erspread,
 At last the roused-up river pours along :
 Resistless, roaring, dreadful, down it comes
 From the rude mountain, and the mossy wild,
 Tumbling through rocks abrupt, and sounding far ;
 Then o'er the sanded valley floating spreads,
 Calm, sluggish, silent ; till again, constrained
 Between two meeting hills, it bursts away,
 Where rocks and woods o'erhang the turbid stream ;
 There gathering triple force, rapid, and deep,
 It boils, and wheels, and foams, and thunders
 through.

Nature ! great parent ! whose unceasing hand
Rolls round the seasons of the changeful year,
How mighty, how majestic, are thy works !
With what a pleasing dread they swell the soul,
That sees astonished, and astonished sings !
Ye too, ye winds ! that now begin to blow
With boisterous sweep, I raise my voice to you.
Where are your stores, ye powerful beings ! say,
Where your aerial magazines reserved,
To swell the brooding terrors of the storm ?
In what far distant region of the sky,
Hushed in deep silence, sleep ye when 'tis calm ?

When from the pallid sky the sun descends,
With many a spot, that o'er his glaring orb
Uncertain wanders, stained ; red fiery streaks
Begin to flush around. The reeling clouds
Stagger with dizzy poise, as doubting yet
Which master to obey ; while rising slow,
Blank, in the leaden-coloured east, the moon
Wears a wan circle round her blunted horns.
Seen through the turbid fluctuating air,
The stars obtuse emit a shivered ray ;
Or frequent seem to shoot athwart the gloom,
And long behind them trail the whitening blaze.
Snatched in short eddies, plays the withered leaf ;
And on the flood the dancing feather floats.
With broadened nostrils to the sky up-turned,
The conscious heifer snuffs the stormy gale.
E'en as the matron, at her nightly task,
With pensive labour draws the flaxen thread,
The wasted taper and the crackling flame
Foretell the blast. But chief the plummy race,
The tenants of the sky, its changes speak.
Retiring from the downs, where all day long
They picked their scanty fare, a blackening train
Of clamorous rooks thick-urge their weary flight,
And seek the closing shelter of the grove.
Assiduous, in his bower, the wailing owl
Plies his sad song. The cormorant on high
Wheels from the deep, and screams along the land.
Loud shrieks the soaring hern ; and with wild wing
The circling sea-fowl cleave the flaky clouds.
Ocean, unequal pressed, with broken tide
And blind commotion heaves ; while from the shore,
Eat into caverns by the restless wave,
And forest-rustling mountain, comes a voice,
That solemn sounding bids the world prepare.
Then issues forth the storm with sudden burst,
And hurls the whole precipitated air
Down in a torrent. On the passive main
Descends th' ethereal force, and with strong gust
Turns from its bottom the discoloured deep.
Through the black night that sits immense around,
Lashed into foam, the fierce conflicting brine
Seems o'er a thousand raging waves to burn :
Meantime the mountain-billows, to the clouds
In dreadful tumult swelled, surge above surge,
Burst into chaos with tremendous roar,
And anchored navies from their stations drive,
Wild as the winds, across the howling waste
Of mighty waters : now th' inflated wave
Straining they scale, and now impetuous shoot
Into the secret chambers of the deep,
The wintry Baltic thundering o'er their head.
Emerging thence again, before the breath
Of full-exerted heaven they wing their course,
And dart on distant coasts ; if some sharp rock,
Or shoal insidious, break not their career,
And in loose fragments fling them floating round.
Nor less on land the loosened tempest reigns.

The mountain thunders ; and its sturdy sons
Stoop to the bottom of the rocks they shade.
Lone on the midnight steep, and all aghast,
The dark way-faring stranger breathless toils,
And, often falling, climbs against the blast.
Low waves the rooted forest, vexed, and sheds
What of its tarnished honours yet remain ;
Dashed down, and scattered, by the tearing wind's
Assiduous fury, its gigantic limbs.
Thus struggling through the dissipated grove,
The whirling tempest raves along the plain ;
And on the cottage thatched, or lordly roof,
Keen-fastening, shakes them to the solid base.
Sleep frightened flies ; and round the rocking dome,
For entrance eager, howls the savage blast.
Then too, they say, through all the burdened air,
Long groans are heard, shrill sounds, and distant
That, uttered by the Demon of the night, [sighs,
Warn the devoted wretch of woe and death.

Huge Up roar lords it wide. The clouds commixed
With stars swift gliding sweep along the sky.
All Nature reels. Till Nature's King, who oft
Amid tempestuous darkness dwells alone,
And on the wings of the careering wind
Walks dreadfully serene, commands a calm ;
Then straight air, sea, and earth, are hushed at once.

As yet 'tis midnight deep. The weary clouds,
Slow-meeting, mingle into solid gloom.
Now, while the drowsy world lies lost in sleep,
Let me associate with the serious Night,
And Contemplation, her sedate compeer ;
Let me shake off th' intrusive cares of day,
And lay the meddling senses all aside.

Where now, ye lying vanities of life !
Ye ever-tempting, ever-cheating train !
Where are you now ? and what is your amount ?
Vexation, disappointment, and remorse.
Sad, sickening thought ! and yet deluded man,
A scene of crude disjointed visions passed,
And broken slumbers, rises still resolved,
With new-flushed hopes, to run the giddy round.
Father of light and life ! thou Good Supreme !
O teach me what is good ! teach me Thyself !
Save me from folly, vanity, and vice,
From every low pursuit ! and feed my soul
With knowledge, conscious peace, and virtue pure ;
Sacred, substantial, never-fading bliss !

The keener tempests rise : and fuming dun
From all the livid east, or piercing north,
Thick clouds ascend ; in whose capacious womb
A vapoury deluge lies, to snow congealed ;
Heavy they roll their fleecy world along,
And the sky saddens with the gathered storm.
Through the hushed air the whitening shower
descends,

At first thin wavering ; till at last the flakes
Fall broad, and wide, and fast, dimming the day
With a continual flow. The cherished fields
Put on their winter-robe of purest white.
'Tis brightness all, save where the new snow melts
Along the mazy current. Low the woods
Bow their hoar head ; and ere the languid sun
Faint from the west emits his evening ray,
Earth's universal face, deep hid, and chill,
Is one wild dazzling waste, that buries wide
The works of man. Drooping, the labourer ox
Stands covered o'er with snow, and then demands
The fruit of all his toil. The fowls of heaven,
Tamed by the cruel season, crowd around
The winnowing store, and claim the little boon

Which Providence assigns them. One alone,
The red-breast, sacred to the household gods,
Wisely regardful of th' embroiling sky,
In joyless fields and thorny thickets leaves
His shivering mates, and pays to trusted man
His annual visit. Half-afraid, he first
Against the window beats ; then, brisk, alights
On the warm hearth ; then, hopping o'er the floor,
Eyes all the smiling family askance,
And pecks, and starts, and wonders where he is :
Till, more familiar grown, the table-crumbs
Attract his slender feet.—The foodless wilds
Pour forth their brown inhabitants. The hare,
Though timorous of heart, and hard beset
By death in various forms, dark snares, and dogs,
And more unpitiful men, the garden seeks,
Urged on by fearless want. The bleating kind
Eye the bleak heaven, and next the glistening earth,
With looks of dumb despair ; then, sad-dispersed,
Dig for the withered herb through heaps of snow.

Now, shepherds, to your helpless charge be kind,
Baffle the raging year, and fill their pens
With food at will ; lodge them below the storm,
And watch them strict ; for from the bellowing east,
In this dire season, oft the whirlwind's wing
Sweeps up the burden of whole wintry plains
At one wide waft, and o'er the hapless flocks,
Hid in the hollow of two neighbouring hills,
The billowy tempest whelms ; till, upward urged,
The valley to a shining mountain swells,
Tipped with a wreath high-curling in the sky.

As thus the snows arise ; and foul, and fierce,
All Winter drives along the darkened air ;
In his own loose-revolving fields the swain
Disastered stands ; sees other hills ascend,
Of unknown joyless brow ; and other scenes,
Of horrid prospect, shag the trackless plain :
Nor finds the river, nor the forest, hid
Beneath the formless wild ; but wanders on
From hill to dale, still more and more astray ;
Impatient flouncing through the drifted heaps,
Stung with the thoughts of home ; the thoughts of
home

Rush on his nerves, and call their vigour forth
In many a vain attempt. How sinks his soul !
What black despair, what horror fills his heart !
When for the dusky spot, which fancy feigned
His tufted cottage rising through the snow,
He meets the roughness of the middle waste,
Far from the track and blest abode of man ;
While round him night resistless closes fast,
And every tempest, howling o'er his head,
Renders the savage wilderness more wild.
Then throng the busy shapes into his mind
Of covered pits, unfathomably deep,
A dire descent ! beyond the power of frost ;
Of faithless bogs ; of precipices huge,
Smoothed up with snow ; and what is land unknown,
What water of the still unfrozen spring,
In the loose marsh or solitary lake,
Where the fresh fountain from the bottom boils.
These check his fearful steps ; and down he sinks,
Beneath the shelter of the shapeless drift,
Thinking o'er all the bitterness of death ;
Mixed with the tender anguish Nature shoots
Through the wrung bosom of the dying man,
His wife, his children, and his friends unseen.
In vain for him th' officious wife prepares
The fire fair-blazing, and the vestment warm ;
In vain his little children, peeping out

Into the mingling storm, demand their sire,
With tears of artless innocence. Alas !
Nor wife, nor children, more shall he behold ;
Nor friends, nor sacred home. On every nerve
The deadly Winter seizes ; shuts up sense ;
And, o'er his inmost vitals creeping cold,
Lays him along the snows a stiffened corse,
Stretched out, and bleaching in the northern blast.

Ah ! little think the gay licentious proud,
Whom pleasure, power, and affluence surround ;
They who their thoughtless hours in giddy mirth,
And wanton, often cruel, riot waste ;
Ah ! little think they, while they dance along,
How many feel, this very moment, death,
And all the sad variety of pain.
How many sink in the devouring flood,
Or more devouring flame. How many bleed,
By shameful variance betwixt man and man.
How many pine in want, and dungeon glooms ;
Shut from the common air and common use
Of their own limbs. How many drink the cup
Of baleful grief, or eat the bitter bread
Of misery. Sore pierced by wintry winds,
How many shrink into the sordid hut
Of cheerless poverty. How many shake
With all the fiercer tortures of the mind,
Unbounded passion, madness, guilt, remorse ;
Whence tumbled headlong from the height of life,
They furnish matter for the tragic Muse ;
E'en in the vale where Wisdom loves to dwell,
With Friendship, Peace, and Contemplation joined,
How many, racked with honest passions, droop
In deep retired distress. How many stand
Around the death-bed of their dearest friends,
And point the parting anguish. Thought fond man
Of these, and all the thousand nameless ills,
That one incessant struggle render life
One scene of toil, of suffering, and of fate,
Vice in his high career would stand appalled,
And heedless rambling Impulse learn to think ;
The conscious heart of Charity would warm,
And her wide wish Benevolence dilate ;
The social tear would rise, the social sigh ;
And into clear perfection, gradual bliss,
Refining still, the social passions work.

And here can I forget the generous band*,
Who, touched with human woe, redressive searched
Into the horrors of the gloomy gaol,
Unpitied, and unheard, where Misery moans,
Where Sickness pines, where Thirst and Hunger
And poor Misfortune feels the lash of Vice. [burn,
While in the land of Liberty, the land
Whose every street and public meeting glow
With open freedom, little tyrants raged ;
Snatched the lean morsel from the starving mouth ;
Tore from cold wintry limbs the tattered weed ;
E'en robb'd them of the last of comforts, sleep ;
The free-born Briton to the dungeon chained,
Or, as the lust of cruelty prevailed,
At pleasure marked him with inglorious stripes ;
And crushed out lives, by secret barbarous ways,
That for their country would have toiled or bled.
O great design ! if executed well,
With patient care, and wisdom-tempered zeal.
Ye sons of Mercy ! yet resume the search,
Drag forth the legal monsters into light,
Wrench from their hands oppression's iron rod,
And bid the cruel feel the pains they give.
Much still untouched remains ; in this rank age,

* The Gaol Committee, in the year 1729.

Much is the patriot's weeding hand required.
The toils of law (what dark insidious men
Have cumbrous added to perplex the truth,
And lengthen simple justice into trade)
How glorious were the day that saw these broke,
And every man within the reach of right!

By wintry famine roused, from all the tract
Of horrid mountains which the shining Alps,
And wavy Apennine, and Pyrenees,
Branch out stupendous into distant lands;
Cruel as death, and hungry as the grave!
Burning for blood, bony, and gaunt, and grim!
Assembling wolves in raging troops descend;
And, pouring o'er the country, bear along,
Keen as the north-wind sweeps the glossy snow.
All is their prize. They fasten on the steed,
Press him to earth, and pierce his mighty heart.
Nor can the bull his awful front defend,
Or shake the murdering savages away.
Rapacious, at the mother's throat they fly,
And tear the screaming infant from her breast.
The godlike face of man avails him nought.
E'en beauty, force divine! at whose bright glance
The generous lion stands in softened gaze,
Here bleeds, a hapless undistinguished prey.
But if, apprised of the severe attack,
The country be shut up, lured by the scent,
On churchyards drear (inhuman to relate!)
The disappointed prowlers fall, and dig
The shrouded body from the grave; o'er which,
Mixed with foul shades and frightened ghosts, they

Among those hilly regions, where embraced [howl.
In peaceful vales the happy Grisons dwell;
Oft, rushing sudden from the loaded cliffs,
Mountains of snow their gathering terrors roll.
From steep to steep, loud-thundering down they
A wintry waste in dire commotion all; [come,
And herds, and flocks, and travellers, and swains,
And sometimes whole brigades of marching troops,
Or hamlets sleeping in the dead of night,
Are deep beneath the smothering ruin whelmed.

Now, all amid the rigours of the year,
In the wild depth of Winter, while without
The ceaseless winds blow ice, be my retreat,
Between the groaning forest and the shore
Beat by the boundless multitude of waves,
A rural, sheltered, solitary scene;
Where ruddy fire and beaming tapers join
To cheer the gloom. There studious let me sit,
And hold high converse with the mighty Dead;
Sages of ancient time, as gods revered,
As gods beneficent, who blessed mankind!
With arts, with arms, and humanised a world.
Roused at th' inspiring thought, I throw aside
The long-lived volume; and, deep-musing, hail
The sacred shades, that slowly-rising pass
Before my wondering eyes. First Socrates,
Who, firmly good in a corrupted state,
Against the rage of tyrants single stood,
Invincible! calm Reason's holy law,
That Voice of God within th' attentive mind,
Obeying, fearless, or in life, or death:
Great moral teacher! wisest of mankind!
Solon the next, who built his common weal
On equity's wide base; by tender laws
A lively people curbing, yet undamped;
Preserving still that quick peculiar fire,
Whence in the laurelled field of finer arts
And of bold freedom, they unequalled shone,
The pride of smiling Greece, and humankind.

Lycurgus then, who bowed beneath the force
Of strictest discipline, severely wise,
All human passions. Following him, I see,
As at Thermopylae he glorious fell,
The firm devoted chief*, who proved by deeds
The hardest lesson which the other taught.
Then Aristides lifts his honest front;
Spotless of heart, to whom th' unflattering voice
Of Freedom gave the noblest name of Just;
In pure majestic poverty revered;
Who, e'en his glory to his country's weal
Submitting, swelled a haughty Rival's† fame.
Reared by his care, of softer ray appears
Cimon, sweet-souled; whose genius, rising strong,
Shook off the load of young debauch; abroad
The scourge of Persian pride, at home the friend
Of every worth and every splendid art;
Modest, and simple, in the pomp of wealth.
Then the last worthies of declining Greece,
Late called to glory, in unequal times,
Pensive, appear. The fair Corinthian boast,
Timoleon, happy temper! mild, and firm,
Who wept the brother while the tyrant bled.
And, equal to the best, the Theban pair‡,
Whose virtues, in heroic concord joined,
Their country raised to freedom, empire, fame.
He too, with whom Athenian honour sunk.
And left a mass of sordid lees behind,
Phocion the Good; in public life severe,
To virtue still inexorably firm;
But when, beneath his low illustrious roof,
Sweet Peace and happy Wisdom smoothed his brow,
Not Friendship softer was, nor Love more kind.
And he, the last of old Lycurgus' sons,
The generous victim to that vain attempt,
To save a rotten state, Agis, who saw
E'en Sparta's self to servile avarice sunk,
The two Achaian heroes close the train:
Aratus, who awhile relumed the soul
Of fondly lingering Liberty in Greece;
And he her darling, as her latest hope,
The gallant Philopœmen; who to arms
Turned the luxurious pomp he could not cure;
Or toiling in his farm, a simple swain,
Or, bold and skilful, thundering in the field.

Of rougher front, a mighty people come!
A race of heroes! in those virtuous times
Which knew no stain, save that with partial flame
Their dearest country they too fondly loved:
Her better Founder first, the light of Rome,
Numa, who softened her rapacious sons;
Servius the king, who laid the solid base
On which o'er earth the vast republic spread.
Then the great consuls venerable rise:
The public Father§ who the private quelled,
As on the dread tribunal sternly sad;
He, whom his thankless country could not lose,
Camillus, only vengeful to her foes;
Fabricius, scorner of all-conquering gold;
And Cincinnatus, awful from the plough.
Thy willing victim|| Carthage, bursting loose
From all that pleading Nature could oppose,
From a whole city's tears, by rigid faith
Imperious called, and Honour's dire command;
Scipio, the gentle chief, humanely brave,
Who soon the race of spotless glory ran,
And, warm in youth, to the poetic shade

* Leonidas.

† Themistocles.

‡ Pelopidas and Epaminondas.

§ Marcus Junius Brutus.

|| Regulus.

With Friendship and Philosophy retired ;
Tully, whose powerful eloquence awhile
Restrained the rapid fate of rushing Rome ;
Unconquered Cato, virtuous in extreme ;
And thou, unhappy Brutus, kind of heart,
Whose steady arm, by awful virtue urged,
Lifted the Roman steel against thy friend :
Thousands besides the tribute of a verse
Demand ; but who can count the stars of heaven ?
Who sing their influence on this lower world ?

Behold, who yonder comes ! in sober state,
Fair, mild, and strong, as is a vernal sun :
'Tis Phœbus' self, or else the Mantuan Swain !
Great Homer too appears, of daring wing,
Parent of song ! and, equal by his side,
The British Muse ; joined hand in hand they walk,
Darkling, full up the middle steep to fame.
Nor absent are those shades, whose skilful touch
Pathetic drew th' impassioned heart, and charmed
Transported Athens with the moral scene ;
Nor those who, tuneful, waked th' enchanting lyre.

First of your kind ! society divine !
Still visit thus my nights, for you reserved,
And mount my soaring soul to thoughts like yours.
Silence, thou lonely power ! the door be thine ;
See on the hallowed hour that none intrude,
Save a few chosen friends, who sometimes deign
To bless my humble roof, with sense refined,
Learning digested well, exalted faith,
Unstudied wit, and humour ever gay.
Or from the Muses' hill will Pope descend,
To raise the sacred hour, to bid it smile,
And with the social spirit warm the heart ?
For though not sweeter his own Homer sings,
Yet is his life the more endearing song.

Where art thou, Hammond ! thou, the darling
pride,

The friend and lover of the tuneful throng !
Ah why, dear youth, in all the blooming prime
Of vernal genius, where disclosing fast
Each active worth, each manly virtue lay,
Why wert thou ravished from our hope so soon ?
What now avails that noble thirst of fame,
Which stung thy fervent breast ! that treasured store
Of knowledge early gained ! that eager zeal
To serve thy country, glowing in the band
Of youthful patriots, who sustain her name ?
What now, alas ! that life-diffusing charm
Of sprightly wit ? that rapture for the Muse,
That heart of friendship, and that soul of joy,
Which bade with softest light thy virtues smile ?
Ah ! only showed, to check our fond pursuits,
And teach our humbled hopes that life is vain !

Thus in some deep retirement would I pass
The winter-glooms, with friends of plant soul,
Or blithe, or solemn, as the theme inspired,
With them would search, if Nature's boundless
frame

Was called, late-rising from the void of night,
Or sprung eternal from th' Eternal Mind ;
Its life, its laws, its progress, and its end.
Hence larger prospects of the beauteous whole
Would, gradual, open on our opening minds ;
And each diffusive harmony unite
In full perfection to th' astonished eye.
Then would we try to scan the moral world,
Which, though to us it seems embroiled, moves on
In higher order ; fitted and impelled
By Wisdom's finest hand, and issuing all
In general good. The sage historic Muse

Should next conduct us through the deeps of time :
Show us how empire grew, declined, and fell,
In scattered states ; what makes the nations smile,
Improves their soil, and gives them double suns ;
And why they pine beneath the brightest skies,
In Nature's richest lap. As thus we talked,
Our hearts would burn within us, would inhale
That portion of divinity, that ray
Of purest heaven, which lights the public soul
Of patriots and of heroes. But if doomed,
In powerless humble fortune, to repress
These ardent risings of the kindling soul ;
Then, e'en superior to ambition, we
Would learn the private virtues : how to glide
Through shades and plains, along the smoothest
stream

Of rural life ; or snatched away by Hope,
Through the dim spaces of futurity,
With earnest eye anticipate those scenes
Of happiness and wonder ; where the mind,
In endless growth and infinite ascent,
Rises from state to state, and world to world.
But, when with these the serious thought is foiled,
We, shifting for relief, would play the shapes
Of frolic Fancy ; and incessant form
Those rapid pictures, that assembled train
Of fleet ideas, never joined before,
Whence lively Wit excites to gay surprise ;
Or folly-painting Humour, grave himself,
Calls Laughter forth, deep-shaking every nerve.

Meantime the village rouses up the fire ;
While well-attested, and as well believed,
Heard solemn, goes the goblin story round ;
Till superstitious horror creeps o'er all.
Or, frequent in the sounding hall, they wake
The rural gambol. Rustic mirth goes round ;
The simple joke that takes the shepherd's heart,
Easily pleased ; the long loud laugh, sincere ;
The kiss, snatched hasty from the side-long maid,
On purpose guardless, or pretending sleep :
The leap, the slap, the haul ; and, shook to notes
Of native music, the respondent dance.
Thus jocund fleets with them the winter-night.

The city swarms intense. The public haunt,
Full of each theme, and warm with mixed discourse,
Hums indistinct. The sons of riot flow
Down the loose stream of false enchanted joy,
To swift destruction. On the rankled soul
The gaming fury falls ; and in one gulf
Of total ruin, honour, virtue, peace,
Friends, families, and fortune, headlong sink.
Up-springs the dance along the lighted dome,
Mixed and evolved, a thousand sprightly ways.
The glittering court effuses every pomp ;
The circle deepens : beamed from gaudy robes,
Tapers, and sparkling gems, and radiant eyes,
A soft effulgence o'er the palace waves :
While, a gay insect in his summer-shine,
The fop, light-fluttering, spreads his mealy wings.
Dread o'er the scene, the ghost of Hamlet stalks ;
Othello rages ; poor Monimia mourns ;
And Belvidera pours her soul in love.
Terror alarms the breast ; the comely tear
Steals o'er the cheek : or else the Comic Muse
Holds to the world a picture of itself,
And raises sly the fair impartial laugh.
Sometimes she lifts her strain, and paints the scenes
Of beauteous life ; whate'er can deck mankind,
Or charm the heart, in generous Bevil* showed.

* A character in "The Conscious Lovers," by Sir R. Steele.

O Thou, whose wisdom, solid yet refined,
 Whose patriot virtues, and consummate skill
 To touch the finer springs that move the world,
 Joined to whate'er the Graces can bestow,
 And all Apollo's animating fire,
 Give thee, with pleasing dignity, to shine
 At once the guardian, ornament, and joy
 Of polished life; permit the rural Muse,
 O Chesterfield! to grace with thee her song,
 Ere to the shades again she humbly flies,
 Indulge her fond ambition, in thy train,
 (For every Muse has in thy train a place)
 To mark thy various full-accomplished mind:
 To mark that spirit, which, with British scorn,
 Rejects the allurements of corrupted power;
 That elegant politeness, which excels,
 E'en in the judgment of presumptuous France,
 The boasted manners of her shining court;
 That wit, the vivid energy of sense,
 The truth of Nature, which, with Attic point,
 And kind well-tempered satire, smoothly keen,
 Steals through the soul, and without pain corrects.
 Or, rising thence with yet a brighter flame,
 O let me hail thee on some glorious day,
 When to the listening senate, ardent, crowd
 Britannia's sons to hear her pleaded cause.
 Then, dressed by thee, more amiably fair,
 Truth the soft robe of mild Persuasion wears:
 Thou to assenting Reason giv'st again
 Her own enlightened thoughts; called from the
 Th' obedient passions on thy voice attend; [heart,
 And e'en reluctant Party feels awhile
 Thy gracious power, as through the varied maze
 Of eloquence, now smooth, now quick, now strong,
 Profound and clear, you roll the copious flood.

To thy loved haunt return, my happy Muse;
 For now, behold, the joyous winter-days,
 Frosty, succeed; and through the blue serene,
 For sight too fine, th' ethereal nitre flies,
 Killing infectious damps, and the spent air
 Storing afresh with elemental life.
 Close crowds the shining atmosphere, and binds
 Our strengthened bodies in its cold embrace,
 Constringent; feeds and animates our blood;
 Refines our spirits, through the new-strung nerves
 In swifter sallies darting to the brain;
 Where sits the soul, intense, collected, cool,
 Bright as the skies, and as the season keen.
 All Nature feels the renovating force
 Of Winter, only to the thoughtless eye
 In ruin seen. The frost-concocted glebe
 Draws in abundant vegetable soul,
 And gathers vigour for the coming year.
 A stronger glow sits on the lively cheek
 Of ruddy Fire, and luculent along
 The purer rivers flow; their sullen deeps,
 Transparent, open to the shepherd's gaze,
 And murmur hoarser at the fixing frost.

What art thou, frost? and whence are thy keen
 Derived, thou secret all-invading power, [stores
 Whom e'en th' illusive fluid cannot fly?
 Is not thy potent energy, unseen,
 Myriads of little salts, or hooked, or shaped
 Like double wedges, and diffused immense
 Through water, earth, and ether? Hence at eve,
 Steamed eager from the red horizon round,
 With the fierce rage of Winter deep suffused,
 An icy gale, oft shifting, o'er the pool
 Breathes a blue film, and in its mid career
 Arrests the bickering stream. The loosened ice,

Let down the flood, and half dissolved by day,
 Rustles no more; but to the sedgy bank
 Fast grows, or gathers round the pointed stone,
 A crystal pavement, by the breath of heaven
 Cemented firm; till, seized from shore to shore,
 The whole imprisoned river grows below.
 Loud rings the frozen earth, and hard reflects
 A double noise; while, at his evening watch,
 The village dog deters the nightly thief;
 The heifer lows; the distant water-fall
 Swells in the breeze; and, with the hasty tread
 Of traveller, the hollow-sounding plain
 Shakes from afar. The full ethereal round,
 Infinite worlds disclosing to the view,
 Shines out intensely keen; and, all one cope
 Of starry glitter, glows from pole to pole.
 From pole to pole the rigid influence falls,
 Through the still night, incessant, heavy, strong,
 And seizes Nature fast. It freezes on;
 Till Morn, late rising o'er the drooping world,
 Lifts her pale eye unjoyous. Then appears
 The various labour of the silent night:
 Prone from the dripping eave, and dumb cascade,
 Whose idle torrents only seem to roar,
 The pendent icicle; the frost-work fair,
 Where transient hues, and fancied figures rise;
 Wide-spouted o'er the hill, the frozen brook,
 A livid tract, cold-gleaming on the morn;
 The forest bent beneath the plummy wave;
 And by the frost refined the whiter snow,
 Encrusted hard, and sounding to the tread
 Of early shepherd, as he pensive seeks
 His pining flock, or from the mountain top,
 Pleased with the slippery surface, swift descends.

On blithesome frolics bent, the youthful swains,
 While every work of man is laid at rest,
 Fond o'er the river crowd, in various sport
 And revelry dissolved; where mixing glad,
 Happiest of all the train! the raptured boy
 Lashes the whirling top. Or, where the Rhine
 Branched out in many a long canal extends,
 From every province swarming, void of care,
 Batavia rushes forth; and as they sweep,
 On sounding skates, a thousand different ways,
 In circling poise, swift as the winds, along,
 The then gay land is maddened all to joy.
 Nor less the northern courts, wide o'er the snow,
 Pour a new pomp. Eager, on rapid sleds,
 Their vigorous youth in bold contention wheel
 The long-resounding course. Meantime, to raise
 The manly strife, with highly blooming charms,
 Flushed by the season, Scandinavia's dames,
 Or Russia's buxom daughters, glow around.
 Pure, quick, and sportful, is the wholesome day;
 But soon elapsed. The horizontal sun,
 Broad o'er the south, hangs at its utmost noon,
 And, ineffectual, strikes the gelid cliff;
 His azure gloss the mountain still maintains,
 Nor feels the feeble touch. Perhaps the vale
 Relents awhile to the reflected ray;
 Or from the forest falls the clustered snow,
 Myriads of gems, that in the waving gleam
 Gay-twinkle as they scatter. Thick around
 Thunders the sport of those, who with the gun,
 And dog impatient bounding at the shot,
 Worse than the season desolate the fields;
 And, adding to the ruins of the year,
 Distress the footed or the feathered game.

But what is this? Our infant Winter sinks,
 Divested of his grandeur, should our eye

Astonished shoot into the frigid zone,
Where, for relentless months, continual Night
Holds o'er the glittering waste her starry reign.

There, through the prison of unbounded wilds,
Barred by the hand of Nature from escape,
Wide roams the Russian exile. Nought around
Strikes his sad eye but deserts lost in snow;
And heavy-loaded groves; and solid floods
That stretch athwart the solitary waste
Their icy horrors to the frozen main;
And cheerless towns far distant, never blessed,
Save when its annual course the caravan
Bends to the golden coast of rich Cathay*,
With news of human kind. Yet there life glows;
Yet cherished there, beneath the shining waste,
The furry nations harbour: tipped with jet,
Fair ermines, spotless as the snows they press;
Sables, of glossy black; and dark embrowned,
Or beauteous freaked with many a mingled hue,
Thousands besides, the costly pride of courts.
There, warm together pressed, the trooping deer
Sleep on the new-fallen snows; and, scarce his head
Raised o'er the heavy wreath, the branching elk
Lies slumbering sullen in the white abyss.
The ruthless hunter wants nor dogs nor toils,
Nor with the dread of sounding bows he drives
The fearful flying race; with ponderous clubs,
As weak against the mountain-heaps they push
Their beating breast in vain, and piteous bray,
He lays them quivering on th' ensanguined snows,
And with loud shouts rejoicing bears them home.
There through the piny forest half absorbed,
Rough tenant of these shades, the shapeless bear,
With dangling ice all horrid, stalks forlorn;
Slow-paced, and sourer as the storms increase,
He makes his bed beneath th' inclement drift,
And with stern patience, scorning weak complaint,
Hardens his heart against assailing want.

Wide o'er the spacious regions of the north,
That see Boötes urge his tardy wain,
A boisterous race, by frosty Caurus† pierced,
Who little pleasure know and fear no pain,
Prolific swarm. They once relumed the flame
Of lost mankind, in polished slavery sunk;
Drove martial horde on horde‡, with dreadful sweep
Resistless rushing o'er the enfeebled south,
And gave the vanquished world another form.
Not such the sons of Lapland: wisely they
Despise th' insensate barbarous trade of war;
They ask no more than simple Nature gives;
They love their mountains and enjoy their storms.
No false desires, no pride-created wants,
Disturb the peaceful current of their time;
And through the restless ever-tortured maze
Of pleasure, or ambition, bid it rage.
Their rein-deer form their riches. These their tents,
Their robes, their beds, and all their homely wealth
Supply, their wholesome fare and cheerful cups.
Obscure at their call, the docile tribe
Yield to the sled their necks, and whirl them swift
O'er hill and dale, heaped into one expanse
Of marbled snow, as far as eye can sweep,
With a blue crust of ice unbounded glazed.
By dancing meteors then, that ceaseless shake
A waving blaze refracted o'er the heavens,
And vivid moons, and stars that keener play
With doubled lustre from the glossy waste,
E'en in the depth of polar night they find

A wondrous day; enough to light the chase,
Or guide their daring steps to Finland fairs.
Wished Spring returns; and from the hazy south,
While dim Aurora slowly moves before,
The welcome sun, just verging up at first,
By small degrees extends the swelling curve,
Till seen at last for gay rejoicing months,
Still round and round his spiral course he winds,
And, as he nearly dips his flaming orb,
Wheels up again, and re-ascends the sky.
In that glad season, from the lakes and floods,
Where pure Niemi's* fairy mountains rise,
And fringed with roses Tengio† rolls his stream,
They draw the copious fry. With these, at eve,
They cheerful loaded to their tents repair;
Where, all day long in useful cares employed,
Their kind unblemished wives the fire prepare.
Thrice happy race! by poverty secured
From legal plunder and rapacious power:
In whom fell interest never yet has sown
The seeds of vice: whose spotless swains ne'er knew
Injurious deed, nor, blasted by the breath
Of faithless love, their blooming daughters woe.

Still pressing on, beyond Tornea's lake,
And Hecla flaming through a waste of snow,
And farthest Greenland, to the pole itself,
Where, failing gradual, life at length goes out,
The Muse expands her solitary flight;
And, hovering o'er the wild stupendous scene,
Beholds new seas beneath another sky‡.
Throned in his palace of cerulean ice,
Here Winter holds his unrejoicing court;
And through his airy hall the loud misrule
Of driving tempest is for ever heard;
Here the grim tyrant meditates his wrath;
Here arms his winds with all-subduing frost,
Moulds his fierce hail, and treasures up his snows,
With which he now oppresses half the globe.

Thence winding eastward to the Tartar's coast,
She sweeps the howling margin of the main;
Where undissolving, from the first of time,
Snows swell on snows amazing to the sky;
And icy mountains high on mountains piled
Seem to the shivering sailor from afar,
Shapeless and white, an atmosphere of clouds.
Projected huge, and horrid o'er the surge,
Alps frown on Alps; or rushing hideous down,
As if old Chaos were again returned,
Wide-rend the deep, and shake the solid pole.
Ocean itself no longer can resist
The binding fury; but, in all its rage
Of tempest taken by the boundless frost,
Is many a fathom to the bottom chained,
And bid to roar no more: a bleak expanse,
Shagged o'er with wavy rocks, cheerless, and void
Of every life, that from the dreary months
Flies conscious southward. Miserable they!
Who, here entangled in the gathering ice,

* M. de Maupertuis, in his book on the "Figure of the Earth," after having described the beautiful lake and mountain of Niemi in Lapland, says, "From this height we had opportunity several times to see those vapours rise from the lake which the people of the country call *Haltios*, and which they deem to be the guardian spirits of the mountains. We had been frightened with stories of bears that haunted this place, but saw none. It seemed rather a place of resort for fairies and genii than bears."

† The same author observes, "I was surprised to see upon the banks of this river (the Tengio) roses of as lively a red as any that are in our gardens."

‡ The other hemisphere.

* The old name for China. † The north-west wind.

‡ The wandering Scythian clans.

Take their last look of the descending sun ;
While, full of death, and fierce with tenfold frost,
The long long night, incumbent o'er their heads,
Falls horrible. Such was the Briton's* fate,
As with first prow (what have not Britons dared !)
He for the passage sought, attempted since
So much in vain, and seeming to be shut
By jealous Nature with eternal bars.
In these fell regions, in Arzina caught,
And to the stony deep his idle ship
Immediate sealed, he with his hapless crew,
Each full exerted at his several task,
Froze into statues ; to the cordage glued
The sailor, and the pilot to the helm.

Hard by these shores, where scarce his freezing
Rolls the wild Oby, live the last of men ; [stream
And half enlivened by the distant sun,
That rears and ripens man, as well as plants,
Here human nature wears its rudest form.
Deep from the piercing season sunk in caves,
Here by dull fires, and with unjoyous cheer,
They waste the tedious gloom. Immersed in furs,
Doze the gross race. Nor sprightly jest, nor song,
Nor tenderness they know ; nor aught of life
Beyond the kindred bears that stalk without.
Till Morn at length, her roses drooping all,
Sheds a long twilight brightening o'er their fields,
And calls the quivered savage to the chase.

What cannot active government perform,
New-moulding man ? Wide-stretching from these
A people savage from remotest time, [shores,
A huge neglected empire, one vast mind,
By heaven inspired, from Gothic darkness called.
Immortal Peter ! first of monarchs ! He
His stubborn country tamed, her rocks, her fens,
Her floods, her seas, her ill-submitting sons ;
And while the fierce barbarian he subdued,
To more exalted soul he raised the man.
Ye shades of ancient heroes, ye who toiled
Through long successive ages to build up
A labouring plan of state, behold at once
The wonder done ! behold the matchless prince !
Who left his native throne, where reigned till then
A mighty shadow of unreal power ;
Who greatly spurned the slothful pomp of courts ;
And roaming every land, in every port
His sceptre laid aside, with glorious hand
Unwearied plying the mechanic tool,
Gathered the seeds of trade, of useful arts,
Of civil wisdom, and of martial skill.
Charged with the stores of Europe home he goes !
Then cities rise amid th' illumined waste ;
O'er joyless deserts smiles the rural reign ;
Far-distant flood to flood is social joined ;
Th' astonished Euxine hears the Baltic roar ;
Proud navies ride on seas that never foamed
With daring keel before ; and armies stretch
Each way their dazzling files, repressing hero
The frantic Alexander of the North,
And awing there stern Othman's shrinking sons.
Sloth lies the land, and Ignorance, and Vice,
Of old dishonour proud ; it glows around,
Taught by the royal hand that roused the whole,
One scene of arts, of arms, of rising trade ;
For what his wisdom planned, and power enforced,
More potent still, his great example showed.

Muttering the winds at eve, with blunted point,
Blow hollow-blustering from the south. Subdued,

The frost resolves into a trickling thaw.
Spotted the mountains shine ; loose sleet descends,
And floods the country round. The rivers swell,
Of bonds impatient. Sudden from the hills,
O'er rocks and woods, in broad brown cataracts,
A thousand snow-fed torrents shoot at once ;
And, where they rush, the wide-resounding plain
Is left one slimy waste. Those sullen seas,
That washed th' ungenial pole, will rest no more
Beneath the shackles of the mighty north ;
But, rousing all their waves, resistless heave.
And hark ! the lengthening roar continuous runs
Athwart the rifted deep : at once it bursts,
And piles a thousand mountains to the clouds.
Ill fares the bark, with trembling wretches charged,
That, tossed amid the floating fragments, moors
Beneath the shelter of an icy isle,
While night o'erwhelms the sea, and horror looks
More horrible. Can human force endure
Th' assembled mischiefs that besiege them round ?
Heart-gnawing hunger, fainting weariness,
The roar of winds and waves, the crush of ice,
Now ceasing, now renewed with louder rage,
And in dire echoes bellowing round the main.
More to embroil the deep, Leviathan
And his unwieldy train, in dreadful sport,
Tempest the loosened brine, while through the
Far from the bleak inhospitable shore, [gloom,
Loading the winds, is heard the hungry howl
Of famished monsters, there awaiting wrecks.
Yet Providence, that ever-waking eye,
Looks down with pity on the feeble toil
Of mortals lost to hope, and lights them safe
Through all this dreary labyrinth of fate.

'Tis done ! dread Winter spreads his latest glooms,
And reigns tremendous o'er the conquered Year.
How dead the vegetable kingdom lies !
How dumb the tuneful ! Horror wide extends
His desolate domain. Behold, fond man !
See here thy pictured life ; pass some few years,
Thy flowering Spring, thy Summer's ardent
Thy sober Autumn fading into age, [strength,
And pale concluding Winter comes at last,
And shuts the scene. Ah ! whither now are fled
Those dreams of greatness—those unsolid hopes
Of happiness—those longings after fame—
Those restless cares—those busy bustling days—
Those gay-spent, festive nights—those veering
thoughts,

Lost between good and ill, that shared thy life ?

All now are vanished ! Virtue sole survives,
Immortal never-failing friend of man,
His guide to happiness on high. And see !
'Tis come, the glorious morn ! the second birth
Of heaven and earth ! Awakening Nature hears
The new-creating word, and starts to life,
In every heightened form, from pain and death
For ever free. The great eternal scheme,
Involving all, and in a perfect whole
Uniting, as the prospect wider spreads,
To Reason's eye refined clears up apace.
Ye vainly wise ! ye blind presumptuous ! now,
Confounded in the dust, adore that Power
And wisdom oft arraigned : see now the cause
Why unassuming Worth in secret lived,
And died neglected,—why the good man's share
In life was gall and bitterness of soul,—
Why the lone widow and her orphans pined
In starving solitude, while Luxury
In palaces lay straining her low thought

* Sir Hugh Willoughby, sent by queen Elizabeth to discover the north-east passage.

To form unreal wants,—why heaven-born Truth,
And Moderation fair, wore the red marks
Of Superstition's scourge,—why licensed Pain,
That cruel spoiler, that embosomed foe,
Embittered all our bliss. Ye good distressed !
Ye noble few ! who here unbending stand
Beneath life's pressure, yet bear up awhile,
And what your bounded view, which only saw
A little part, deemed evil is no more :
The storms of Wintry Time will quickly pass,
And one unbounded Spring encircle all.

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A HYMN.

—◆—

THESE, as they change, Almighty Father, these  
Are but the varied God. The rolling year  
Is full of Thee. Forth in the pleasing Spring  
Thy beauty walks, thy tenderness and love.  
Wide flush the fields ; the softening air is balm ;  
Echo the mountains round ; the forest smiles ;  
And every sense and every heart is joy.  
Then comes thy glory in the Summer-months,  
With light and heat refulgent. Then thy sun  
Shoots full perfection through the swelling year ;  
And oft thy voice in dreadful thunder speaks ;  
And oft at dawn, deep noon, or falling eve,  
By brooks and groves, in hollow-whispering gales.  
Thy bounty shines in Autumn unconfin'd,  
And spreads a common feast for all that lives.  
In Winter awful Thou ! with clouds and storms  
Around Thee thrown, tempest o'er tempest rolled.  
Majestic darkness ! on the whirlwind's wing  
Riding sublime, Thou bidd'st the world adore,  
And humblest Nature with thy northern blast.

Mysterious round ! what skill, what force divine,  
Deep felt, in these appear ! a simple train,  
Yet so delightful mixed, with such kind art,  
Such beauty and beneficence combined,  
Shade, unperceived, so softening into shade,  
And all so forming an harmonious whole,  
That, as they still succeed, they ravish still.  
But wandering oft, with brute unconscious gaze,  
Man marks not Thee, marks not the mighty hand  
That, ever-busy, wheels the silent spheres ;  
Works in the secret deep ; shoots, steaming, thence  
The fair profusion that o'erspreads the Spring ;  
Flings from the sun direct the flaming day ;  
Feeds every creature ; hurls the tempest forth ;  
And, as on earth this grateful change revolves,  
With transport touches all the springs of life.

Nature, attend ! join, every living soul  
Beneath the spacious temple of the sky,  
In adoration join ; and, ardent, raise  
One general song ! To Him, ye vocal gales,  
Breathe soft, whose Spirit in your freshness  
breathes :

Oh, talk of Him in solitary glooms !  
Where, o'er the rock, the scarcely waving pine  
Fills the brown shade with a religious awe.  
And ye, whose bolder note is heard afar,  
Who shake th' astonish'd world, lift high to heaven  
Th' impetuous song, and say from whom you rage.  
His praise, ye brooks, attune, ye trembling rills ;  
And let me catch it as I muse along.  
Ye headlong torrents, rapid and profound,—  
Ye softer floods, that lead the humid maze

Along the vale,—and thou, majestic main,  
A secret world of wonders in thyself,—  
Sound His stupendous praise ; whose greater  
voice

Or bids you roar, or bids your roarings fall.  
Soft-roll your incense, herbs, and fruits, and flowers,  
In mingled clouds to Him ; whose sun exalts,  
Whose breath perfumes you, and whose pencil  
paints.

Ye forests, bend, ye harvests, wave to Him ;  
Breathe your still song into the reaper's heart,  
As home he goes beneath the joyous moon.  
Ye that keep watch in heaven, as earth asleep  
Unconscious lies, effuse your mildest beams,  
Ye constellations, while your angels strike,  
Amid the spangled sky, the silver lyre.  
Great source of day ! best image here below  
Of thy Creator, ever pouring wide,  
From world to world, the vital ocean round,  
On Nature write with every beam His praise.  
The thunder rolls : be hushed the prostrate world ;  
While cloud to cloud returns the solemn hymn.  
Bleat out afresh, ye hills : ye mossy rocks,  
Retain the sound : the broad responsive low,  
Ye valleys, raise ; for the Great Shepherd reigns,  
And his unsuffering kingdom yet will come.  
Ye woodlands all, awake : a boundless song  
Burst from the groves ! and when the restless day,  
Expiring, lays the warbling world asleep,  
Sweetest of birds, sweet Philomela, charm  
The listening shades, and teach the night His praise.  
Ye chief, for whom the whole creation smiles,  
At once the head, the heart, and tongue of all,  
Crown the great hymn ! In swarming cities vast,  
Assembled men, to the deep organ join  
The long-resounding voice, oft breaking clear,  
At solemn pauses, through the swelling base ;  
And, as each mingling flame increases each,  
In one united ardour rise to heaven.  
Or if you rather choose the rural shade,  
And find a fane in every sacred grove ;  
There let the shepherd's flute, the virgin's lay,  
The prompting seraph, and the poet's lyre,  
Still sing the God of Seasons, as they roll !  
For me, when I forget the darling theme,  
Whether the blossom blows, the Summer ray  
Russets the plain, inspiring Autumn gleams,  
Or Winter rises in the blackening east ;  
Be my tongue mute, may Fancy paint no more,  
And, dead to joy, forget my heart to beat !

Should fate command me to the farthest verge  
Of the green earth, to distant barbarous climes,  
Rivers unknown to song ; where first the sun  
Gilds Indian mountains, or his setting beam  
Flames on th' Atlantic isles ; 'tis nought to me :  
Since God is ever present, ever felt,  
In the void waste as in the city full ;  
And where He vital breathes there must be joy.  
When e'en at last the solemn hour shall come,  
And wing my mystic flight to future worlds,  
I cheerful will obey ; there, with new powers,  
Will rising wonders sing : I cannot go  
Where Universal Love not smiles around,  
Sustaining all yon orbs, and all their suns ;  
From seeming Evil still educating Good,  
And better thence again, and better still,  
In infinite progression. But I lose  
Myself in Him, in Light Ineffable !  
Come then, expressive Silence, muse His praise.

# THE CASTLE OF INDOLENCE.

## CANTO I.

The castle hight of Indolence,  
And its false luxury :  
Where for a little time, alas !  
We liv'd right jollily.

### I.

O MORTAL man, who livest here by toil,  
Do not complain of this thy hard estate ;  
That like an emmet thou must ever moil,  
Is a sad sentence of an ancient date ;  
And, certes, there is for it reason great ;  
For though sometimes it makes thee weep and wail,  
And curse thy star, and early drudge and late,  
Withouten that would come a heavier bale,  
Loose life, unruly passions, and diseases pale.

### II.

In lowly dale, fast by a river's side,  
With woody hill o'er hill encompass'd round,  
A most enchanting Wizard did abide,  
Than whom a fiend more fell is nowhere found.  
It was, I ween, a lovely spot of ground :  
And there a season between June and May, [brown'd,  
Half pranked with spring, with summer half im-  
A listless climate made, where, sooth to say,  
No living wight could work, ne cared e'en for play.

### III.

Was nought around but images of rest :  
Sleep-soothing groves, and quiet lawns between ;  
And flowery beds that slumbrous influence keet,  
From poppies breath'd ; and beds of pleasant green,  
Where never yet was creeping creature seen.  
Meantime, unnumber'd glitt'ring streamlets play'd,  
And hurried everywhere their waters sheen ;  
That, as they bicker'd through the sunny glade,  
Though restless still themselves, a lulling murmur made.

### IV.

Join'd to the prattle of the purling rills  
Were heard the lowing herds along the vale,  
And flocks loud bleating from the distant hills,  
And vacant shepherds piping in the dale :  
And, now and then, sweet Philomel would wail,  
Or stock-doves plain amid the forest deep,  
That drowsy rustled to the sighing gale ;  
And still a coil the grasshopper did keep ;  
Yet all these sounds ybent inclined all to sleep.

### V.

Full in the passage of the vale, above,  
A sable, silent, solemn forest stood,  
Where nought but shadowy forms was seen to  
As Idless fancied in her dreaming mood : [move,  
And up the hills, on either side, a wood  
Of blackening pines, aye waving to and fro,  
Sent forth a sleepy horror through the blood ;  
And where this valley winded out below, [to flow.  
The murm'ring main was heard, and scarcely heard,

### VI.

A pleasing land of drowsy head it was,  
Of dreams that wave before the half-shut eye ;  
And of gay castles in the clouds that pass,  
For ever flushing round a summer-sky :

There eke the soft Delights, that witchingly  
Instil a wanton sweetness through the breast,  
And the calm Pleasures always hover'd nigh ;  
But whate'er smack'd of noyance, or unrest,  
Was far, far off expell'd from this delicious nest.

### VII.

The landscape such, inspiring perfect ease,  
Where INDOLENCE (for so the wizard hight)  
Close hid his castle 'mid embowering trees,  
That half shut out the beams of Phœbus bright,  
And made a kind of checker'd day and night ;  
Meanwhile, unceasing at the massy gate,  
Beneath a spacious palm, the wicked wight  
Was placed ; and to his lute, of cruel fate [estate.  
And labour harsh, complain'd, lamenting man's

### VIII.

Thither continual pilgrims crowded still,  
From all the roads of earth that pass thereby :  
For, as they chaunc'd to breathe on neighbouring  
The freshness of this valley smote their eye, [hill,  
And drew them ever and anon more nigh ;  
Till clustering round th' enchanter false they hung,  
Ymolten with his syren melody ;  
While o'er the enfeebling lute his hand he flung,  
And to the trembling chords these tempting verses sung :—

### IX.

"Behold ! ye pilgrims of this earth, behold !  
See all, but man, with unearn'd pleasure gay :  
See her bright robes the butterfly unfold,  
Broke from her wintry tomb in prime of May !  
What youthful bride can equal her array ?  
Who can with her for easy pleasure vie ?  
From mead to mead with gentle wing to stray,  
From flower to flower on balmy gales to fly,  
Is all she has to do beneath the radiant sky.

### X.

"Behold the merry minstrels of the morn,  
The swarming songsters of the careless grove,  
Ten thousand throats ! that, from the flowering thorn,  
Hymn their good God, and carol sweet of love,  
Such grateful kindly raptures them emove :  
They neither plough, nor sow ; ne, fit for flail,  
E'er to the barn the nodden sheaves they drove ;  
Yet theirs each harvest dancing in the gale,  
Whatever crowns the hill, or smiles along the vale.

### XI.

"Outcast of nature, man ! the wretched thrall  
Of bitter dropping sweat, of sweltry pain,  
Of cares that eat away the heart with gall,  
And of the vices, an inhuman train,  
That all proceed from savage thirst of gain :  
For when hard-hearted Int'rest first began  
To poison earth, Astræa left the plain ;  
Guile, Violence, and Murder seized on man,  
And, for soft milky streams, with blood the rivers ran.

### XII.

"Come, ye, who still the cumbrous load of life  
Push hard up hill ; but as the furthest steep  
You trust to gain, and put an end to strife,  
Down thunders back the stone with mighty sweep,

And hurls your labours to the valley deep,  
For ever vain : come, and withouten fee,  
I in oblivion will your sorrows steep,  
Your cares, your toils ; will steep you in a sea  
Of full delight : O come, ye weary wights, to me !

## XIII.

" With me, you need not rise at early dawn,  
To pass the joyless day in various stounds ;  
Or, louting low, on upstart Fortune fawn,  
And sell fair honour for some paltry pounds ;  
Or through the city take your dirty rounds,  
To cheat, and dun, and lie, and visit pay,  
Now flatt'ring base, now giving secret wounds ;  
Or prowl in courts of law for human prey,  
In venal senate thief, or rob on broad highway.

## XIV.

" No cocks, with me, to rustic labour call,  
From village on to village sounding clear ;  
To tardy swain no shrill-voic'd matrons squall ;  
No dogs, no babes, no wives, to stun your ear ;  
No hammers thump ; no horrid blacksmith sear,  
No noisy tradesman your sweet slumbers start,  
With sounds that are a misery to hear :  
But all is calm, as would delight the heart  
Of Sybarite of old, all nature, and all art.

## XV.

" Here nought but candour reigns, indulgent ease,  
Good-nature lounging, sauntering up and down :  
They who are pleas'd themselves must always  
On others' ways they never squint a frown [please ;  
Nor heed what haps in hamlet or in town :  
Thus, from the source of tender Indolence,  
With milky blood the heart is overflown,  
Issooth'd and sweeten'd by the social sense ; [hence.  
For Interest, Envy, Pride, and Strife are banish'd

## XVI.

" What, what is virtue, but repose of mind,  
A pure ethereal calm, that knows no storm,  
Above the reach of wild Ambition's wind,  
Above those passions that this world deform,  
And torture man, a proud malignant worm ?  
But here, instead, soft gales of passion play,  
And gently stir the heart, thereby to form  
A quicker sense of joy ; as breezes stray [gay.  
Across th' enliven'd skies, and make them still more

## XVII.

" The best of men have ever lov'd repose :  
They hate to mingle in the filthy fray ;  
Where the soul sours, and gradual rancour grows,  
Embitter'd more from peevish day to day.  
E'en those whom Fame has lent her fairest ray,  
The most renown'd of worthy wights of yore,  
From a base world at last have stol'n away :  
So Scipio, to the soft Cumæan shore  
Retiring, tasted joy he never knew before.

## XVIII.

" But if a little exercise you choose,  
Some zest for ease, 'tis not forbidden here :  
Amid the groves you may indulge the Muse,  
Or tend the blooms, and deck the vernal year ;  
Or softly stealing, with your wat'ry gear,  
Along the brooks, the crimson-spotted fry  
You may delude : the whilst, amused, you hear  
Now the hoarse stream, and now the zephyr's sigh,  
Attuned to the birds, and woodland melody.

## XIX.

" O grievous folly ! to heap up estate,  
Losing the days you see beneath the sun ;

When, sudden, comes blind unrelenting Fate,  
And gives th' untasted portion you have won  
With ruthless toil, and many a wretch undone,  
To those who mock you, gone to Pluto's reign,  
There with sad ghosts to pine, and shadows dun :  
But sure it is of vanities most vain,  
To toil for what you here untailing may obtain."

## XX.

He ceased. But still their trembling ears retain'd  
The deep vibrations of his witching song ;  
That, by a kind of magic power, constrain'd  
To enter in, pell-mell, the list'ning throng.  
Heaps pour'd on heaps, and yet they slept along,  
In silent ease ; as when beneath the beam  
Of summer-moons, the distant woods among,  
Or by some flood all silver'd with the gleam,  
The soft-embodied fays through airy portal stream :

## XXI.

By the smooth demon so it order'd was,  
And here his baneful bounty first began ;  
Though some there were who would not further  
And his alluring baits suspected han : [pass,  
The wise distrust the too fair-spoken man.  
Yet through the gate they cast a wishful eye :  
Not to move on, perdie, is all they can :  
For do their very best they cannot fly,  
But often each way look, and often sorely sigh.

## XXII.

When this the watchful wicked wizard saw,  
With sudden spring he leap'd upon them straight :  
And soon as touched by his unhallow'd paw,  
They found themselves within the cursed gate ;  
Full hard to be repass'd, like that of fate.  
Not stronger were of old the giant crew,  
Who sought to pull high Jove from regal state ;  
Though feeble wretch he seem'd, of fallow hue :  
Certes, who bides his grasp, will that encounter rue.

## XXIII.

For whomso'er the villain takes in hand,  
Their joints unknit, their sinews melt apace ;  
As lithe they grow as any willow-wand,  
And of their vanish'd force remains no trace :  
So when a maiden fair, of modest grace,  
In all her buxom blooming May of charms,  
Is seized in some losel's hot embrace,  
She waxeth very weakly, as she warms,  
Then sighing yields her up to love's delicious harms.

## XXIV.

Wak'd by the crowd, slow from his bench arose  
A comely, full-spread porter, swo'n with sleep :  
His calm, broad, thoughtless aspect breath'd repose ;  
And in sweet torpor he was plunged deep,  
Ne could himself from ceaseless yawning keep ;  
While o'er his eyes the drowsy liquor ran, [peep:  
Through which his half-wak'd soul would faintly  
Then, taking his black staff, he call'd his man,  
And roused himself as much as rouse himself he can.

## XXV.

The lad leap'd lightly at his master's call :  
He was, to weet, a little roguish page,  
Save sleep and play who minded nought at all,  
Like most the untaught striplings of his age.  
This boy he kept each band to disengage,  
Garters and buckles, task for him unfit,  
But ill becoming his grave personage,  
And which his portly paunch would not permit :  
So this same limber page to all performed it.

## XXVI.

Meantime, the master-porter wide display'd  
Great store of caps, of slippers, and of gowns ;  
Wherewith he those who enter'd in array'd,  
Loose as the breeze that plays along the downs,  
And waves the summer-woods when ev'ning frowns :  
O fair undress, best dress ! it checks no vein,  
But every flowing limb in pleasure drowns, [fain,  
And heightens ease with grace. This done, right  
Sir porter sat him down, and turn'd to sleep again.

## XXVII.

Thus easy robed, they to the fountain sped  
That in the middle of the court up-threw  
A stream, high spouting from its liquid bed,  
And falling back again in drizzly dew ;  
There each deep draughts, as deep he thirsted, drew :  
It was a fountain of nepenthe rare,  
Whence, as Dan Homer sings, huge pleasaunce  
And sweet oblivion of vile earthly care ; [grew,  
Fair gladsome waking thoughts, and joyous dreams  
more fair.

## XXVIII.

This rite perform'd, all inly pleas'd and still,  
Withouten tromp, was proclamation made :  
" Ye sons of Indolence, do what you will ;  
And wander where you list, through hall or glade ;  
Be no man's pleasure for another staid ;  
Let each as likes him best his hours employ,  
And curs'd be he who minds his neighbour's trade !  
Here dwells kind Ease and unrepining Joy :  
He little merits bliss who others can annoy."

## XXIX.

Straight of these endless numbers, swarming round,  
As thick as idle motes in sunny ray,  
Not one eftsoons in view was to be found,  
But every man stroll'd off his own glad way,  
Wide o'er this ample court's blank area,  
With all the lodges that thereto pertain'd,  
No living creature could be seen to stray ;  
While solitude, and perfect silence reign'd ;  
So that to think you dreamt you almost were con-  
strain'd.

## XXX.

As when a shepherd of the Hebrid-Isles \*,  
Plac'd far amid the melancholy main,  
(Whether it be lone Fancy him beguiles ;  
Or that aerial beings sometimes deign  
To stand, embodied, to our senses plain)  
Sees on the naked hill, or valley low,  
The whilst in ocean Phœbus dips his wain,  
A vast assembly moving to and fro :  
Then all at once in air dissolves the wondrous show.

## XXXI.

Ye gods of quiet, and of sleep profound !  
Whose soft dominion o'er this castle sways,  
And all the widely silent places round,  
Forgive me, if my trembling pen displays  
What never yet was sung in mortal lays.  
But how shall I attempt such arduous string ?  
I who have spent my nights, and nightly days,  
In this soul-deadening place loose loitering :  
Ah ! how shall I for this uprear my moulted wing ?

## XXXII.

Come on, my Muse, nor stoop to low despair,  
Thou imp of Jove, touch'd by celestial fire !  
Thou yet shalt sing of war, and actions fair,  
Which the bold sons of Britain will inspire ;  
Of ancient bards thou yet shalt sweep the lyre ;

\* The Hebrides, on the west coast of Scotland.

Thou yet shalt tread in tragic pall the stage,  
Paint love's enchanting woes, the hero's ire,  
The sage's calm, the patriot's noble rage, [age.  
Dashing Corruption down through every worthless

## XXXIII.

The doors, that knew no shrill alarming bell,  
Ne curs'd knocker plied by villain's hand,  
Self-open'd into halls, where, who can tell  
What elegance and grandeur wide expand ;  
The pride of Turkey and of Persia land ?  
Soft quilts on quilts, on carpets carpets spread,  
And couches stretch'd around in seemly band ;  
And endless pillows rise to prop the head ; [bed ;  
So that each spacious room was one full-swelling

## XXXIV.

And everywhere huge cover'd tables stood,  
With wines high flavour'd and rich viands crown'd,  
Whatever sprightly juice or tasteful food  
On the green bosom of this earth are found,  
And all old Ocean 'genders in his round :  
Some hand unseen these silently supply'd,  
E'en undemand'd by a sign or sound ;  
You need but wish, and, instantly obey'd, [play'd.  
Fair rang'd the dishes rose, and thick the glasses

## XXXV.

Here freedom reign'd, without the least alloy ;  
Nor gossip's tale, nor ancient maiden's gail,  
Nor saintly spleen durst murmur at our joy,  
And with envenom'd tongue our pleasures pall.  
For why ? there was but one great rule for all ;  
To wit, that each should work his own desire,  
And eat, drink, study, sleep, as it may fall,  
Or melt the time in love, or wake the lyre,  
And carol what, unbid, the Muses might inspire.

## XXXVI.

The rooms with costly tapestry were hung,  
Where was inwoven many a gentle tale ;  
Such as of old the rural poets sung,  
Or of Arcadian or Sicilian vale :  
Reclining lovers, in the lonely dale,  
Pour'd forth at large the sweetly tortur'd heart ;  
Or, sighing tender passion, swell'd the gale,  
And taught charm'd Echo to resound their smart ;  
While flocks, woods, streams around, repose and  
peace impart.

## XXXVII.

Those pleas'd the most, where, by a cunning hand,  
Depainted was the patriarchal age ;  
What time Dan Abra'am left the Chaldee land,  
And pastur'd on from verdant stage to stage,  
Where fields and fountains fresh could best engage.  
Toil was not then : of nothing took they heed,  
But with wild beasts the sylvan war to wage,  
And o'er vast plains their herds and flocks to feed :  
Bless'd sons of Nature they ! true golden age indeed !

## XXXVIII.

Sometimes the pencil, in cool airy halls,  
Bade the gay bloom of vernal landscapes rise,  
Or Autumn's varied shades imbrown the walls :  
Now the black tempest strikes th' astonish'd eyes ;  
Now down the steep the flashing torrent flies ;  
The trembling sun now plays o'er ocean blue,  
And now rude mountains frown amid the skies ;  
Whate'er Lorraine light-touch'd with soft'ning hue,  
Or savage Rosa dash'd, or learned Poussin drew.

## XXXIX.

Each sound too here to languishment inclin'd,  
Lull'd the weak bosom, and induced ease ;

Aërial music in the warbling wind,  
At distance rising oft, by small degrees,  
Nearer and nearer came, till o'er the trees  
It hung, and breath'd such soul-dissolving airs,  
As did, alas! with soft perdition please:  
Entangled deep in its enchanting snares,  
The list'ning heart forgot all duties and all cares.

XL.

A certain music, never known before,  
Here lull'd the pensive, melancholy mind;  
Full easily obtain'd. Behoves no more,  
But sidelong, to the gently waving wind,  
To lay the well-tun'd instrument reclin'd;  
From which, with airy-flying fingers light,  
Beyond each mortal touch the most refin'd,  
The god of winds drew sounds of deep delight:  
Whence, with just cause, the harp of Æolus it hight.

XLI.

Ah me! what hand can touch the string so fine?  
Who up the lofty diapason roll  
Such sweet, such sad, such solemn airs divine,  
Then let them down again into the soul?  
Now rising love they fann'd; now pleasing dote  
They breath'd, in tender musings, through the  
And now a graver sacred strain they stole, [heart;  
As when seraphic hands a hymn impart:  
Wild warbling nature all, above the reach of art!

XLII.

Such the gay splendour, the luxurious state,  
Of caliphs old, who on the Tigris' shore,  
In mighty Bagdat, populous and great,  
Held their bright court, where was of ladies store;  
And verse, love, music, still the garland wore:  
When Sleep was coy, the bard, in waiting there,  
Cheer'd the lone midnight with the Muse's lore;  
Composing music bade his dreams be fair,  
And music lent new gladness to the morning air.

XLIII.

Near the pavilions where we slept, still ran  
Soft tinkling streams, and dashing waters fell,  
And sobbing breezes sigh'd, and oft began  
(So work'd the wizard) wintry storms to swell,  
As heaven and earth they would together melt:  
At doors and windows, threat'ning, seem'd to call  
The demons of the tempest, growling fell,  
Yet the least entrance found they none at all,  
When sweeter grew our sleep, secure in massy hall.

XLIV.

And hither Morpheus sent his kindest dreams,  
Raising a world of gayer tinct and grace,  
O'er which were shadowy cast Elysian gleams,  
That play'd, in waving lights, from place to place,  
And shed a roseate smile on Nature's face.  
Not Titian's pencil e'er could so array,  
So fleece with clouds the pure ethereal space;  
Ne could it e'er such melting forms display,  
As loose on flowery beds all languishingly lay.

XLV.

No, fair illusions! artful phantoms, no!  
My Muse will not attempt your fairy land:  
She has no colours that like you can glow:  
To catch your vivid scenes too gross her hand.  
But, sure it is, was ne'er a subtler band  
Than these same guileful angel-seeming sprites,  
Who thus in dreams voluptuous, soft, and bland,  
Pour'd all th' Arabian heaven upon our nights,  
And bless'd them oft besides with more refin'd de-  
lights.

XLVI.

They were, in sooth, a most enchanting train,  
E'en feigning virtue; skilful to unite  
With evil good, and strew with pleasure pain.  
But for those fiends, whom blood and broils delight,  
Who hurl the wretch, as if to hell outright,  
Down down black gulfs, where sullen waters sleep,  
Or hold him clambering all the fearful night  
On beetling cliffs, or pent in ruins deep; [to keep.  
They, till due time should serve, were bid farhence.

XLVII.

Ye guardian spirits, to whom man is dear,  
From these foul demons shield the midnight  
Angels of fancy and of love, be near, [gloom:  
And o'er the blank of sleep diffuse a bloom:  
Evoke the sacred shades of Greece and Rome,  
And let them virtue with a look impart:  
But chief, awhile, O! lend us from the tomb  
Those long-lost friends for whom in love we smart,  
And fill with pious awe and joy-mix'd woe the heart.

XLVIII.

Or are you sportive—Bid the morn of youth  
Rise to new light, and beam afresh the days  
Of innocence, simplicity, and truth;  
To cares estrang'd, and manhood's thorny ways.  
What transport, to retrace our boyish plays,  
Our easy bliss, when each thing joy supplied;  
The woods, the mountains, and the warbling maze  
Of the wild brooks!—but, fondly wand'ring wide,  
My Muse, resume the task that yet doth thee abide.

XLIX.

One great amusement of our household was,  
In a huge crystal magic globe to spy,  
Still as you turn'd it, all things that do pass  
Upon this ant-hill earth, where constantly  
Of idly busy men the restless fry  
Run bustling to and fro with foolish haste,  
In search of pleasures vain that from them fly,  
Or which, obtain'd, the caitiffs dare not taste:—  
When nothing is enjoy'd, can there be greater waste?

L.

"Of vanity the mirror," this was call'd:  
Here you a muckworm of the town might see  
At his dull desk, amid his ledgers stall'd,  
Eat up with carking care and penury;  
Most like to carcase parch'd on gallow-tree.  
"A penny saved is a penny got:"  
Firm to this scoundrel maxim keepeth he,  
Ne of its rigour will he bate a jot,  
Till it has quench'd his fire, and banished his pot.

LI.

Straight from the filth of this low grub, behold!  
Comes flutt'ring forth a gaudy spendthrift heir,  
All glossy gay, enamell'd all with gold,  
The silly tenant of the summer air,  
In folly lost, of nothing takes he care;  
Pimps, lawyers, stewards, harlots, flatt'ers vile,  
And thieving tradesmen him among them share:  
His father's ghost from limbo lake, the while,  
Sees this, which more damnation doth upon him pile.

LII.

This globe pourtray'd the race of learned men,  
Still at their books, and turning o'er the page,  
Backwards and forwards: oft they snatch the pen,  
As if inspir'd, and in a Thespian rage;  
Then write, and blot, as would your ruth engage:

Why, authors, all this scrawl and scribbling sore?  
To lose the present, gain the future age,  
Praised to be when you can hear no more, [store.  
And much enrich'd with fame, when useless worldly

LIII.

Then would a splendid city rise to view,  
With carts, and cars, and coaches roaring all:  
Wide-pour'd abroad behold the giddy crew:  
See how they dash along from wall to wall!  
At every door, hark how they thrund'ring call!  
Good lord! what can this giddy rout excite?  
Why, on each other with fell tooth to fall,  
A neighbour's fortune, fame, or peace, to blight,  
And make new tiresome parties for the coming night.

LIV.

The puzzling sons of party next appear'd,  
In dark cabals and nightly juntos met; [rear'd  
And now they whisper'd close, now shrugging  
Th' important shoulder; then, as if to get  
New light, their twinkling eyes were inward set.  
No sooner Lucifer\* recalls affairs,  
Than forth they various rush in mighty fret; [cares,  
When lo! push'd up to power, and crown'd their  
In comes another set, and kicketh them down stairs.

LV.

But what most show'd the vanity of life  
Was to behold the nations all on fire,  
In cruel broils engag'd, and deadly strife:  
Most Christian kings, inflam'd by black desire,  
With honourable ruffians in their hire,  
Cause war to rage, and blood around to pour;  
Of this sad work when each begins to tire,  
They sit them down just where they were before,  
Till for new scenes of woe peace shall their force  
restore.

LVI.

To number up the thousands dwelling here,  
A useless were, and eke an endless task;  
From kings, and those who at the helm appear,  
To gypsies brown in summer-glades who bask.  
Yea many a man, perdie, I could unmask,  
Whose desk and table make a solemn show,  
With tape-tied trash, and suits of fools that ask  
For place or pension, laid in decent row;  
But these I passen by, with nameless numbers moe.

LVII.

Of all the gentle tenants of the place,  
There was a man of special grave remark;  
A certain tender gloom o'erspread his face;  
Pensive, not sad; in thought involv'd, not dark;  
As soot this man could sing as morning lark,  
And teach the noblest morals of the heart:  
But these his talents were yburied stark;  
Of the fine stores he nothing would impart,  
Which or boon Nature gave, or nature-painting Art.

LVIII.

To noon-tide shades incontinent he ran,  
Where purls the brook with sleep-inviting sound;  
Or when Dan Sol to slope his wheels began,  
Amid the broom he bask'd him on the ground,  
Where the wild thyme and camomile are found:  
There would he linger, till the latest ray  
Of light sat trembling on the welkin's bound; [stray,  
Then homeward through the twilight shadows  
Saunt'ring and slow. So had he passed many a day!

LIX.

Yet not in thoughtless slumber were they pass'd;  
For oft the heavenly fire, that lay conceal'd

\* The morning star.

Beneath the sleeping embers, mounted fast,  
And all its native light anew reveal'd:  
Oft as he travers'd the cerulean field,  
And mark'd the clouds that drove before the wind,  
Ten thousand glorious systems would he build,  
Ten thousand great ideas fill'd his mind; [hind.  
But with the clouds they fled, and left no trace be-

LX.

With him was sometimes join'd, in silent walk,  
(Profoundly silent, for they never spoke)  
One † shyer still, who quite detested talk:  
Oft, stung by spleen, at once away he broke,  
To groves of pine, and broad o'ershadowing oak;  
There, inly thrill'd, he wander'd all alone,  
And on himself his pensive fury wroke,  
Never utter'd word, save when first shone [done."  
The glitt'ring star of eve—"Thank heaven! the day is

LXI.

Here lurk'd a wretch, who had not crept abroad  
For forty years, ne face of mortal seen;  
In chamber brooding like a loathly toad:  
And sure his linen was not very clean.  
Through secret loop-holes, that had practis'd been  
Near to his bed, his dinner vile he took;  
Unkempt, and rough, of squalid face and mien,  
Our Castle's shame! whence, from his filthy nook,  
We drove the villain out, for fitter lair to look.

LXII.

One day there chaunc'd into these halls to rove  
A joyous youth, who took you at first sight;  
Him the wild wave of pleasure hither drove,  
Before the sprightly tempest tossing light:  
Certes, he was a most engaging wight,  
Of social glee, and wit humane though keen,  
Turning the night to day and day to night:  
For him the merry bells had rung, I ween,  
If, in this nook of quiet, bells had ever been.

LXIII.

But not e'en pleasure to excess is good:  
What most elates, then sinks the soul as low:  
When springtide joy pours in with copious flood,  
The higher still th' exulting billows flow,  
The further back again they flagging go,  
And leave us grov'ling on the dreary shore:  
Taught by this son of joy, we found it so,  
Who, whilst he stay'd kept in a gay uproar  
Our madden'd Castle all, th' abode of sleep no more.

LXIV.

As when in prime of June a burnish'd fly,  
Sprung from the meads, o'er which he sweeps along,  
Cheer'd by the breathing bloom and vital sky,  
Tunes up amid these airy halls his song,  
Soothing at first the gay reposing throng:  
And oft he sips their bowl; or, nearly drown'd,  
He, thence recovering, drives their beds among,  
And scares their tender sleep, with trump profound;  
Then out again he flies, to wing his mazy round.

LXV.

Another guest ‡ there was, of sense refin'd,  
Who felt each worth, for every worth he had;  
Serene yet warm, humane yet firm his mind,  
As little touch'd as any man's with bad;  
Him through their inmost walks the Muses lad,  
To him the sacred love of nature lent,  
And sometimes would he make our valley glad;  
When as we found he would not here be pent,  
To him the better sort this friendly message sent:

† Conjecture has applied this to Dr. Armstrong the poet.

‡ George, Lord Lyttleton.

## LXVI.

"Come, dwell with us! true son of Virtue, come!  
But if, alas! we cannot thee persuade  
To lie content beneath our peaceful dome,  
Ne ever more to quit our quiet glade;  
Yet when at last thy toils but ill apaid  
Shall dead thy fire, and damp its heavenly spark,  
Thou wilt be glad to seek the rural shade,  
There to indulge the Muse, and nature mark:  
We then a lodge for thee will rear in Hagley Park."

## LXVII.

Here whilom ligg'd th' Esopus \* of the age;  
But call'd by fame, in soul ypricked deep,  
A noble pride restored him to the stage,  
And rous'd him like a giant from his sleep.  
E'en from his slumbers we advantage reap:  
With double force the enliven'd scene he wakes,  
Yet quits not nature's bounds. He knows to keep  
Each due decorum: now the heart he shakes,  
And now with well-urged sense the enlighten'd  
judgment takes.

## LXVIII.

A bard here dwelt, more fat than bard beseems;  
Who, void of envy, guile, and lust of gain†,  
On virtue still, and nature's pleasing themes,  
Pour'd forth his unpremeditated strain:  
The world forsaking with a calm disdain,  
Here laugh'd he careless in his easy seat;  
Here quaff'd, encircled with the joyous train,  
Oft moralizing sage: his ditty sweet  
He loathed much to write, ne cared to repeat.

## LXIX.

Full oft by holy feet our ground was trod,  
Of clerks good plenty here you mote espy.  
A little, round, fat, oily man ‡ of God,  
Was one I chiefly mark'd among the fry:  
He had a roguish twinkle in his eye,  
And shone all glitt'ring with ungodly dew,  
If a tight damsel chaunc'd to trippen by;  
Which when observ'd, he shrunk into his mew,  
And straight would recollect his piety anew.

## LXX.

Nor be forgot a tribe, who minded nought  
(Old inmates of the place) but state affairs:  
They look'd, perdie, as if they deeply thought,  
And on their brow sat every nation's cares;  
The world by them is parcell'd out in shares,  
When in the Hall of Smoke they congress hold,  
And the sage berry sun-burnt Mocha bears  
Has clear'd their inward eye: then, smoke-enroll'd,  
Their oracles break forth, mysterious as of old.

## LXXI.

Here languid Beauty kept her pale-faced court:  
Bevies of dainty dames, of high degree,  
From every quarter hither made resort;  
Where, from gross mortal care and bus'ness free,  
They lay, pour'd out in ease and luxury.  
Or should they a vain show of work assume,  
Alas! and well-a-day! what can it be?  
To knot, to twist, to range the vernal bloom;  
But far is cast the distaff, spinning-wheel, and loom.

\* Mr. Quin.

† The following lines of this stanza were written by a friend of the author (since understood to have been Lord Lyttleton), and were designed to portray the character of Thomson.

‡ The Rev. Mr. Murdoch, Thomson's friend and biographer.

## LXXII.

Their only labour was to kill the time  
(And labour dire it is, and weary woe);  
They sit, they loll, turn o'er some idle rhyme;  
Then, rising sudden, to the glass they go,  
Or saunter forth, with tott'ring step and slow:  
This soon too rude an exercise they find;  
Straight on the couch their limbs again they throw,  
Where hours on hours they sighing lie reclin'd,  
And court the vapoury god, soft breathing in the  
wind.

## LXXIII.

One nymph there was, methought, in bloom of May,  
On whom the idle Fiend glanc'd many a look,  
In hopes to lead her down the slipp'ry way  
To taste of Pleasure's deep deceitful brook:  
No virtues yet her gentle mind forsook:  
No idle whims, no vapours fill'd her brain;  
But Prudence for her youthful guide she took,  
And Goodness, which no earthly vice could stain,  
Dwelt in her mind; she was ne proud, I ween, or  
vain.

## LXXIV.

Now must I mark the villany we found,  
But ah! too late, as shall eftsoons be shown.  
A place here was, deep, dreary, under ground;  
Where still our inmates, when unpleasing grown,  
Diseas'd, and loathsome, privily were thrown:  
Far from the light of heaven, they languish'd  
Unpitied uttering many a bitter groan; [there,  
For of these wretches taken was no care:  
Fierce fiends, and hags of hell, their only nurses  
were.

## LXXV.

Alas! the change! from scenes of joy and rest,  
To this dark den, where sickness toss'd alway.  
Here Lethargy, with deadly sleep oppress'd,  
Stretch'd on his back, a mighty lubbard, lay,  
Heaving his sides, and snored night and day;  
To stir him from his trance it was not eath,  
And his half-open'd eyne he shut straightway;  
He led, I wot, the softest way to death,  
And taught withouten pain and strife to yield the  
breath.

## LXXVI.

Of limbs enormous, but withal unsound,  
Soft-swoln and pale, here lay the Hydropsy:  
Unwieldy man, with belly monstrous round,  
For ever fed with watery supply;  
For still he drank, and yet he still was dry.  
And moping here did Hypochondria sit,  
Mother of Spleen, in robes of various dye,  
Who vexed was full oft with ugly fit;  
And some her frantic deem'd, and some her deem'd  
a wit.

## LXXVII.

A lady proud she was, of ancient blood,<sup>1</sup>  
Yet oft her fear her pride made crouchen low,  
She felt, or fancied in her fluttering mood,  
All the diseases which the spittles know,  
And sought all physic which the shops bestow,  
And still new leeches and new drugs would try,  
Her humour ever wavering to and fro: [cry,  
For sometimes she would laugh, and sometimes  
Then sudden waxed wroth, and all she knew not  
why.

## LXXVIII.

Fast by her side a listless maiden pin'd,  
With aching head, and squeamish heart-burnings;  
Pale, bloated, cold, she seem'd to hate mankind,  
Yet lov'd in secret all forbidden things.

And here the Tertian shakes his chilling wings ;  
The sleepless Gout here counts the crowing cocks,  
A wolf now gnaws him, now a serpent stings ;  
Whilst Apoplexy cramm'd Intemp'rance knocks  
Down to the ground at once, as butcher felleth ox\*.

## CANTO II.

The Knight of Arts and Industry,  
And his achievements fair,  
That, by this Castle's overthrow,  
Secur'd, and crowned were.

## I.

ESCAP'd the castle of the sire of sin,  
Ah ! where shall I so sweet a dwelling find ?  
For all around, without, and all within,  
Nothing save what delightful was and kind,  
Of goodness savouring and a tender mind,  
E'er rose to view. But now another strain,  
Of doleful note, alas ! remains behind :  
I now must sing of pleasure turn'd to pain,  
And of the false enchanter INDOLENCE complain.

## II.

Is there no patron to protect the Muse,  
And fence for her Parnassus' barren soil ?  
To every labour its reward accrues,  
And they are sure of bread who swink and moil ;  
But a fell tribe the Aonian live despoil,  
As ruthless wasps oft rob the painful bee :  
Thus while the laws not guard that noblest toil,  
Ne for the Muses other meed decree,  
They praised are alone, and starve right merrily.

## III.

I care not, Fortune, what you me deny :  
You cannot rob me of free Nature's grace :  
You cannot shut the windows of the sky,  
Through which Aurora shows her bright'ning face ;  
You cannot bar my constant feet to trace  
The woods and lawns, by living stream, at eve :  
Let health my nerves and finer fibres brace,  
And I their toys to the great children leave :  
Of fancy, reason, virtue, nought can me bereave.

## IV.

Come then, my Muse, and raise a bolder song ;  
Come lig no more upon the bed of sloth,  
Dragging the lazy languid line along,  
Fond to begin, but still to finish loth,  
Thy half-writ scrolls all eaten by the moth :  
Arise, and sing that gen'rous imp of fame,  
Who, with the sons of Softness nobly wrought,  
To sweep away this human lumber came,  
Or in a chosen few to rouse the slumb'ring flame.

## V.

In Fairy Land there lived a knight of old,  
Of feature stern, Selvaggio well yclep'd,  
A rough unpolish'd man, robust and bold,  
But wondrous poor : he neither sow'd nor reap'd,  
No stores in summer for cold winter heap'd ;  
In hunting all his days away he wore ;  
Now scorched by June, now in November steep'd,  
Now pinch'd by biting January sore,  
He still in woods pursued the libbard and the boar.

## VI.

As he one morning, long before the dawn,  
Prick'd through the forest to dislodge his prey,

\* These four concluding stanzas were claimed by Dr. Armstrong, and inserted in his " Miscellanies."

Deep in the winding bosom of a lawn,  
With wood wild fring'd, he mark'd a taper's ray,  
That from the beating rain, and wintry fray,  
Did to a lonely cot his steps decoy ;  
There, up to earn the needments of the day,  
He found dame Poverty, nor fair nor coy :  
Her he compress'd, and fill'd her with a lusty boy.

## VII.

Amid the greenwood shade this boy was bred,  
And grew at last a knight of muchel fame,  
Of active mind and vigorous lustyhed,  
The Knight of Arts and Industry by name :  
Earth was his bed, the boughs his roof did frame ;  
He knew no bev'rage but the flowing stream ;  
His tasteful well-earn'd food the sylvan game,  
Or the brown fruit with which the woodlands teem :  
The same to him glad summer, or the winter breame.

## VIII.

So pass'd his youthly morning, void of care,  
Wild as the colts that through the commons run :  
For him no tender parents troubled were ;  
He of the forest seem'd to be the son,  
And, certes, had been utterly undone,  
But that Minerva pity of him took,  
With all the gods that love the rural wonne,  
That teach to tame the soil and rule the crook ;  
Ne did the sacred Nine disdain a gentle look.

## IX.

Of fertile genius, him they nurtur'd well,  
In every science, and in every art,  
By which mankind the thoughtless brutes excel,  
That can or use, or joy, or grace impart,  
Disclosing all the powers of head and heart :  
Ne were the goodly exercises spar'd,  
That brace the nerves, or make the limbs alert,  
And mix elastic force with firmness hard :  
Was never knight on ground mote be with him compar'd.

## X.

Sometimes, with early dawn, he mounted gay  
The hunter steed, exulting o'er the dale,  
And drew the roseate breath of orient day ;  
Sometimes, retiring to the secret vale,  
Yclad in steel, and bright with burnish'd mail,  
He strain'd the bow, or toss'd the sounding spear,  
Or, darting on the goal, outstripp'd the gale,  
Or wheel'd the chariot in its mid career,  
Or strenuous wrestled hard with many a tough compeer.

## XI.

At other times he pried through Nature's store,  
Whate'er she in th' ethereal round contains,  
Whate'er she hides beneath her verdant floor,  
The vegetable and the mineral reigns ;  
Or else he scann'd the globe, those small domains,  
Where restless mortals such a turmoil keep,  
Its seas, its floods, its mountains, and its plains :  
But more he search'd the mind, and rous'd from sleep  
Those moral seeds whence we heroic actions reap.

## XII.

Nor would he scorn to stoop from high pursuits  
Of heavenly Truth, and practise what she taught :  
Vain is the tree of knowledge without fruits !  
Sometimes in hand the spade or plough he caught,  
Forth calling all with which boon earth is fraught ;

Sometimes he plied the strong mechanic tool,  
Or rear'd the fabric from the finest draught ;  
And oft he put himself to Neptune's school,  
Fighting with winds and waves on the vex'd ocean pool.

## XIII.

To solace then these rougher toils, he tried  
To touch the kindling canvas into life ;  
With nature his creating pencil vied,  
With nature joyous at the mimic strife :  
Or, to such shapes as grac'd Pygmalion's wife  
He hew'd the marble ; or, with varied fire,  
He rous'd the trumpet, and the martial fire,  
Or bade the lute sweet tenderness inspire,  
Or verses form'd that well might wake Apollo's lyre.

## XIV.

Accomplish'd thus, he from the woods issu'd,  
Full of great aims, and bent on bold emprise ;  
The work, which long he in his breast had brew'd,  
Now to perform he ardent did devise ;  
To wit, a barbarous world to civilise.  
Earth was till then a boundless forest wild ;  
Nought to be seen but savage wood and skies ;  
No cities nourish'd arts, no culture smil'd,  
No government, no laws, no gentle manners mild.

## XV.

A rugged wight, the worst of brutes, was man :  
On his own wretched kind he, ruthless, prey'd :  
The strongest still the weakest overran ;  
In every country mighty robbers sway'd,  
And guile and ruffian force were all their trade.  
Life was a scene of rapine, want, and woe ;  
Which this brave knight, in noble anger, made  
To swear he would the rascal rout o'erthrow,  
For, by the powers divine, it should no more be so !

## XVI.

It would exceed the purport of my song,  
To say how this best sun, from orient climes,  
Came beaming life and beauty all along,  
Before him chasing indolence and crimes.  
Still as he pass'd, the nations he sublimed,  
And calls forth arts and virtues with his ray :  
Then Egypt, Greece, and Rome their golden times,  
Successive had ; but now in ruins grey,  
They lie, to slavish sloth and tyranny a prey.

## XVII.

To crown his toils, Sir Industry then spread  
The swelling sail, and made for Britain's coast.  
A sylvan life till then the natives led,  
In the brown shades and green-wood forest lost,  
All careless rambling where it lik'd them most :  
Their wealth the wild deer bouncing through the glade ;  
They lodg'd at large, and liv'd at Nature's cost ;  
Save spear and bow, withouten other aid ;  
Yet not the Roman steel their naked breast dismay'd.

## XVIII.

He lik'd the soil, he lik'd the element skies,  
He lik'd the verdant hills and flowery plains :  
" Be this my great, my chosen isle," he cries,  
" This, whilst my labours Liberty sustains,  
This queen of ocean all assault disdains."  
Nor lik'd he less the genius of the land,  
To freedom apt and persevering pains,  
Mild to obey, and gen'rous to command,  
Temper'd by forming Heaven with kindest, firmest hand.

## XIX.

Here, by degrees, his master-work arose,  
Whatever arts and industry can frame :  
Whatever finished Agriculture knows,  
Fair queen of arts ! from heaven itself who came,  
When Eden flourish'd in unspotted fame ;  
And still with her sweet Innocence we find,  
And tender Peace, and joys without a name,  
That, while they ravish, tranquillise the mind :  
Nature and art at once, delight and use combin'd.

## XX.

Then towns he quicken'd by mechanic arts,  
And bade the fervent city glow with toil ;  
Bade social commerce raise renowned marts,  
Join land to land, and marry soil to soil ;  
Unite the poles, and without bloody spoil  
Bring home of either Ind the gorgeous stores ;  
Or, should despotic rage the world embroil,  
Bade tyrants tremble on remotest shores,  
While o'er th' encircling deep Britannia's thunder roars.

## XXI.

The drooping Muses then he westward call'd  
From the fam'd city\* by Propontic Sea,  
What time the Turk th' enfeebled Grecian thrall'd ;  
Thence from their cloister'd walks he set them free,  
And brought them to another Castalie,  
Where Isis many a famous nursing breeds ;  
Or where old Cam soft-paces o'er the lea  
In pensive mood, and tunes his Doric reeds,  
The whilst his flocks at large the lonely shepherd feeds.

## XXII.

Yet the fine arts were what he finish'd least.  
For why ? They are the quintessence of all,  
The growth of labouring time, and slow increas'd ;  
Unless, as seldom chances, it should fall  
That mighty patrons the coy sisters call  
Up to the sunshine of uncumber'd ease,  
Where no rude care the mounting thought may thrall,  
And where they nothing have to do but please :  
Ah ! gracious God ! thou know'st they ask no other fees.

## XXIII.

But now, alas ! we live too late in time :  
Our patrons now e'en grudge that little claim,  
Except to such as sleek the soothing rhyme ;  
And yet, forsooth, they wear Mæcenæ's name,  
Poor sons of puffed-up vanity, not fame.  
Unbroken spirits, cheer ! still, still remains  
Th' eternal patron, Liberty ; whose flame,  
While she protects, inspires the noblest strains :  
The best and sweetest far, are toil-created gains.

## XXIV.

When as the knight had framed, in Britain-land,  
A matchless form of glorious government,  
In which the sovereign laws alone command,  
Laws 'tablish'd by the public free consent,  
Whose majesty is to the sceptre lent ;  
When this great plan, with each dependent art,  
Was settled firm, and to his heart's content,  
Then sought he from the toilsome scene to part,  
And let life's vacant eve breathe quiet through the heart.

\* Constantinople.

## XXV.

For this he chose a farm in Deva's vale,  
Where his long alleys peep'd upon the main:  
In this calm seat he drew the healthful gale;  
Here mix'd the chief, the patriot, and the swain.  
The happy monarch of his sylvan train,  
Here, sided by the guardians of the fold,  
He walk'd his rounds, and cheer'd his blest  
domain.

His days, the days of unstain'd nature, roll'd  
Replete with peace and joy, like patriarchs' of  
old.

## XXVI.

Witness, ye lowing herds, who gave him milk,—  
Witness, ye flocks, whose woolly vestments far  
Exceed soft India's cotton, or her silk,—  
Witness, with Autumn charg'd the nodding ear,  
That homeward came beneath sweet evening's  
star,  
Or of September-moons the radiance mild.  
O hide thy head, abominable War!  
Of crimes and ruffian idleness the child!  
From Heaven this life ysprung, from hell thy  
glories vild!

## XXVII.

Nor from this deep retirement banish'd was  
Th' amusing care of rural industry.  
Still, as with grateful change the seasons pass,  
New scenes arise, new landscapes strike the eye,  
And all th' enliven'd country beautify:  
Gay plains extend where marshes slept before;  
O'er recent meads th' exulting streamlets fly;  
Dark frowning heaths grow bright with Ceres'  
store,  
And woods imbrown the steep, or wave along the  
shore.

## XXVIII.

As nearer to his farm you made approach,  
He polish'd Nature with a finer hand:  
Yet on her beauties durst not Art encroach;  
'Tis Art's alone these beauties to expand.  
In graceful dance immingled, o'er the land,  
Pan, Pales, Flora, and Pomona play'd:  
Here, too, brisk gales the rude wild common fann'd,  
A happy place, where free, and unafraid,  
Amid the flow'ring brakes each cower creature  
stray'd.

## XXIX.

But in prime vigour what can last for aye?  
That soul-enfeebling wizard, Indolence,  
I whilom sung, wrought in his works decay:  
Spread far and wide was his curs'd influence;  
Of public virtue much he dull'd the sense,  
E'en much of private; ate our spirit out,  
And fed our rank luxurious vices: whence  
The land was overlaid with many a lout  
Not, as old Fame reports, wise, gen'rous, bold, and  
stout.

## XXX.

A rage of pleasure madden'd every breast;  
Down to the lowest lees the ferment ran;  
To his licentious wish each must be bless'd,  
With joy be fever'd, snatch it as he can.  
Thus Vice the standard rear'd; her arrier-ban  
Corruption call'd, and loud she gave the word,  
"Mind, mind yourselves! why should the vulgar  
man,  
The lacquey be more virtuous than his lord?  
Enjoy this span of life! 'tis all the gods afford."

## XXXI.

The tidings reach'd to where, in quiet hall,  
The good old knight enjoy'd well-earn'd repose:  
"Come, come, Sir Knight! thy children on thee call;  
Come, save us yet, ere ruin round us close!  
The demon Indolence thy toils o'erthrows."  
On this the noble colour stain'd his cheeks,  
Indignant, glowing through the whit'ning snows  
Of venerable eld; his eye full speaks [breaks.  
His ardent soul, and from his couch at once he

## XXXII.

"I will," he cried, "so help me, God! destroy  
That villain Archimage."—His page then straight  
He to him call'd, a fiery-footed boy,  
Benempt Despatch:—"My steed be at the gate;  
My bard attend; quick, bring the net of fate."  
This net was twisted by the Sisters three,  
Which, when once cast o'er harden'd wretch, too  
Repentance comes, replevy cannot be [late  
From the strong iron grasp of vengeful Destiny.

## XXXIII.

He came, the bard, a little Druid wight,  
Of wither'd aspect; but his eye was keen,  
With sweetness mix'd. In russet brown bedight,  
As is his sister\* of the copses green,  
He crept along, unpromising of mien.  
Gross he who judges so. His soul was fair,  
Bright as the children of yon azure sheen!  
True comeliness, which nothing can impair,  
Dwells in the mind: all else is vanity and glare.

## XXXIV.

"Come," quoth the knight, "a voice has reach'd  
The demon Indolence threatens overthrow [mine ear:  
To all that for mankind is good and dear:  
Come, Philomelus, let us instant go,  
O'erturn his bowers, and lay his castle low.  
Those men, those wretched men, who will be slaves,  
Must drink a bitter wrathful cup of woe:  
But some there be, thy song, as from their graves,  
Shall raise. Thrice happy he! who without rigour  
saves!"

## XXXV.

Issuing forth, the knight bestrode his steed,  
Of ardent bay, and on whose front a star  
Shone blazing bright: sprung from the gen'rous  
That whirl of active day the rapid ear, [breed,  
He pranc'd along, disdainful gate or bar.  
Meantime, the bard on milk-white palfrey rode,  
An honest sober beast, that did not mar  
His meditations, but full softly trode;  
And much they moralis'd as thus yfere they yode.

## XXXVI.

They talk'd of virtue and of human bliss.  
What else so fit for man to settle well?  
And still their long researches met in this,  
This truth of truths, which nothing can refel:—  
"From virtue's fount the purest joys outwell,  
Sweet rills of thought that cheer the conscious soul;  
While vice pours forth the troubled streams of hell,  
The which, how'er disguis'd, at last with dole  
Will, through the tortur'd breast, their fiery torrent  
roll."

## XXXVII.

At length it dawn'd, that fatal valley gay,  
O'er which high wood-crown'd hills their summits  
On the cool height awhile our palmers stay, [rear:  
And spite e'en of themselves their senses cheer;

\* The Nightingale.

Then to the wizard's wonne their steps they steer.  
Like a green isle, it broad beneath them spread,  
With gardens round, and wand'ring currents clear,  
And tufted groves to shade the meadow bed,  
Sweet airs and song ; and without hurry all seem'd  
glad.

XXXVIII.

"As God shall judge me, knight, we must forgive  
(The half-enraptur'd Philomelus cried)  
The frail good man deluded here to live,  
And in these groves his musing fancy hide.  
Ah! nought is pure. It cannot be denied,  
That virtue still some tincture has of vice,  
And vice of virtue. What should then betide,  
But that our charity be not too nice?  
Come, let us those we can to real bliss entice."

XXXIX.

"Ay, sicker," quoth the knight, "all flesh is frail,  
To pleasant sin and joyous dalliance bent ;  
But let not brutish Vice of this avail,  
And think to 'scape deserved punishment.  
Justice were cruel weakly to relent ;  
From Mercy's self she got her sacred glaive :  
Grace be to those who can, and will, repent ;  
But penance long, and dreary, to the slave,  
Who must in floods of fire his gross foul spirit lave."

XL.

Thus, holding high discourse, they came to where  
The cursed carle was at his wonted trade ;  
Still tempting heedless men into his snare,  
In witching wise, as I before have said.  
But when he saw, in goodly gear array'd,  
The grave majestic knight approaching nigh,  
And by his side the bard so sage and staid,  
His count'nance fell ; yet oft his anxious eye  
Mark'd them, like wily fox who roosted cock doth  
spy.

XLI.

Nathless, with feign'd respect, he bade give back  
The rabble rout, and welcom'd them full kind ;  
Struck with the noble train, they were not slack  
His orders to obey, and fall behind.  
Then he resum'd his song ; and unconfin'd  
Pour'd all his music, ran through all his strings :  
With magic dust their eyne he tries to blind,  
And virtue's tender airs o'er weakness flings.  
What pity base his song who so divinely sings !

XLII.

Elate in thought, he counted them his own,  
They listen'd so intent with fix'd delight :  
But they instead, as if transnew'd to stone,  
Marvell'd he could with such sweet art unite  
The lights and shades of manners, wrong and right.  
Meantime, the silly crowd the charm devour,  
Wide pressing to the gate. Swift on the knight  
He darted fierce, to drag him to his bower,  
Who backening shunn'd his touch, for well he knew  
its power.

XLIII.

As in throng'd amphitheatre of old  
The wary Retiarius trapp'd his foe,  
E'en so the knight, returning on him bold,  
At once involv'd him in the Net of Woe  
Whereof I mention made not along ago.  
Enrag'd at first, he scorn'd so weak a jail,  
And leap'd, and flew, and founc'd to and fro :  
But, when he found that nothing could avail,  
He sat him felly down, and gnawed his bitter nail.

XLIV.

Alarm'd, th' inferior demons of the place  
Rais'd rueful shrieks and hideous yells around ;  
Black stormy clouds deform'd the welkin's face,  
And from beneath was heard a wailing sound,  
As of infernal sprites in cavern bound ;  
A solemn sadness every creature strook,  
And lightnings flash'd, and horror rock'd the  
ground : [look,  
Huge crowds on crowds outpour'd, with blemish'd  
As if on Time's last verge this frame of things had  
shook.

XLV.

Soon as the short-liv'd tempest was yspent,  
Steam'd from the jaws of vex'd Avernus hole,  
And hush'd the hubbub of the rabblement,  
Sir Industry the first calm moment stole :  
"There must," he cried, "amid so vast a shoal,  
Be some who are not tainted at the heart,  
Not poison'd quite by this same villain's bowl :  
Come then, my bard, thy heavenly fire impart ;  
Touch soul with soul, till forth the latent spirit  
start."

XLVI.

The bard obey'd ; and taking from his side,  
Where it in seemly sort depending hung,  
His British harp, its speaking strings he tried,  
The which with skilful touch he deftly strung,  
Till tinkling in clear symphony they rung.  
Then, as he felt the Muses come along,  
Light o'er the chords his raptur'd hand he flung,  
And play'd a prelude to his rising song :  
The whilst, like midnight mute, ten thousands round  
him throng.

XLVII.

Thus, ardent, burst his strain :—"Ye hapless race,  
Dire labouring here to smother Reason's ray,  
That lights our Maker's image in our face,  
And gives us wide o'er earth unquestion'd sway,  
What is th' adored Supreme Perfection, say ?—  
What, but eternal never-resting soul,  
Almighty power, and all-directing day ;  
By whom each atom stirs, the planets roll ;  
Who fills, surrounds, informs, and agitates the  
whole ?

XLVIII.

"Come, to the beaming God your hearts unfold !  
Draw from its fountain life ! 'Tis thence, alone,  
We can excel. Up from unfeeling mould,  
To seraphs burning round th' Almighty's throne,  
Life rising still on life, in higher tone,  
Perfection forms, and with perfection bliss.  
In universal nature this clear shown,  
Not needeth proof : to prove it were I wis,  
To prove the beauteous world excels the brute abyss.

XLIX.

"Is not the field, with lively culture green,  
A sight more joyous than the dead morass ?  
Do not the skies, with active ether clean,  
And fam'd by sprightly zephyrs, far surpass  
The foul November fogs, and slumbrous mass  
With which sad Nature veils her drooping face ?  
Does not the mountain stream, as clear as glass,  
Gay-dancing on, the putrid pool disgrace ?  
The same in all holds true, but chief in human race.

L.

"It was not by vile loitering in ease,  
That Greece obtain'd the brighter palm of art ;

That soft yet ardent Athens learn'd to please,  
To keen the wit, and to sublime the heart,  
In all supreme ! complete in every part !  
It was not thence majestic Rome arose,  
And o'er the nations shook her conquering dart:  
For sluggard's brow the laurel never grows ;  
Renown is not the child of indolent Repose.

## LI.

"Had unambitious mortals minded nought,  
But in loose joy their time to wear away ;  
Had they alone the lap of Dalliance sought,  
Pleas'd on her pillow their dull heads to lay,  
Rude nature's state had been our state to-day ;  
No cities e'er their towery fronts had rais'd,  
No arts had made us opulent and gay ;  
With brother-brutes the human race had graz'd ;  
None e'er had soar'd to fame, none honour'd been,  
none prais'd.

## LII.

"Great Homer's song had never fir'd the breast  
To thirst of glory and heroic deeds ;  
Sweet Maro's muse, sunk in inglorious rest,  
Had silent slept amid the Mincian reeds ;  
The wits of modern time had told their beads,  
And monkish legends been their only strains ;  
Our Milton's Eden had lain wrapt in weeds,  
Our Shakspeare stroll'd and laugh'd with Warwick  
swains,  
Ne had my master Spenser charm'd his Mulla's  
plains.

## LIII.

"Dumb too had been the sage historic muse,  
And perish'd all the sons of ancient Fame ;  
Those starry lights of virtue, that diffuse  
Through the dark depth of time their vivid flame,  
Had all been lost with such as have no name.  
Who then had scorn'd his ease for others' good ?  
Who then had toil'd rapacious men to tame ?  
Who in the public breach devoted stood,  
And for his country's cause been prodigal of blood ?

## LIV.

"But, should to fame your hearts unfeeling be,  
If right I read, you pleasure all require :  
Then hear how best may be obtain'd this fee,  
How best enjoy'd this nature's wide desire.  
Toil and be glad ! let Industry inspire  
Into your quicken'd limbs her buoyant breath !  
Who does not act is dead ; absorpt entire  
In miry sloth, no pride, no joy he hath :  
O leaden-hearted men, to be in love with death !

## LV.

"Ah ! what avail the largest gifts of Heaven,  
When drooping health and spirits go amiss ?  
How tasteless then whatever can be given !  
Health is the vital principle of bliss,  
And exercise of health. In proof of this,  
Behold the wretch, who slugs his life away,  
Soon swallow'd in disease's sad abyss ;  
While he whom toil has brac'd, or manly play,  
Has light as air each limb, each thought as clear as  
day.

## LVI.

"O who can speak the vig'rous joys of health !  
Unlogg'd the body, unobscur'd the mind :  
The morning rises gay, with pleasing stealth ;  
The temperate evening falls serene and kind.  
In health the wiser brutes true gladness find :

See ! how the younglings frisk along the meads,  
As May comes on, and wakes the balmy wind ;  
Rampant with life, their joy all joy exceeds :  
Yet what but high-strung health this dancing plea-  
saunce breeds ?

## LVII.

"But here, instead, is foster'd every ill  
Which or distemper'd minds or bodies know.  
Come then, my kindred spirits, do not spill  
Your talents here : this place is but a show,  
Whose charms delude you to the den of woe.  
Come, follow me, I will direct you right,  
Where pleasure's roses, void of serpents, grow,  
Sincere as sweet ; come, follow this good Knight,  
And you will bless the day that brought him to your  
sight.

## LVIII.

"Some he will lead to courts, and some to camps,  
To senates some, and public sage debates,  
Where, by the solemn gleam of midnight lamps,  
The world is pois'd, and manag'd mighty states ;  
To high discovery some, that new creates  
The face of earth ; some to the thriving mart ;  
Some to the rural reign, and softer fates ;  
To the sweet Muses some, who raise the heart :  
All glory shall be yours, all nature, and all art !

## LIX.

"There are, I see, who listen to my lay,  
Who wretched sigh for virtue, but despair :  
'All may be done,' methinks I hear them say,  
'E'en death despis'd by gen'rous actions fair ;  
All, but for those who to these bowers repair,  
Their every power dissolv'd in luxury,  
To quit of torpid sluggishness the lair,  
And from the powerful arms of Sloth get free :  
'Tis rising from the dead—Alas ! it cannot be !'

## LX.

"Would you then learn to dissipate the band  
Of these huge threat'ning difficulties dire,  
That in the weak man's way like lions stand,  
His soul appal, and damp his rising fire ?  
Resolve, resolve, and to be men aspire.  
Exert that noblest privilege, alone  
Here to mankind indulg'd ; controul desire :  
Let godlike Reason, from her sovereign throne,  
Speak the commanding word, 'I will !' and it is done.

## LXI.

"Heavens ! can you then thus waste, in shameful  
Your few important days of trial here ? [wise,  
Heirs of eternity ! yborn to rise  
Through endless states of being, still more near  
To bliss approaching, and perfection clear ;  
Can you renounce a fortune so sublime,  
Such glorious hopes, your backward steps to steer,  
And roll, with vilest brutes, through mud and slime ?  
No ! no !—Your heaven-touch'd hearts disdain the  
sordid crime !"

## LXII.

"Enough ! enough !" they cried—straight, from the  
The better sort on wings of transport fly : [crowd,  
As when amid the lifeless summits proud  
Of Alpine cliffs, where to the gelid sky  
Snows pil'd on snows in wintry torpor lie,  
The rays divine of vernal Phoebus play ;  
Th' awaken'd heaps, in streamlets from on high,  
Rous'd into action, lively leap away,  
Glad warbling through the vales, in their new being  
gay.

## LXIII.

Not less the life, the vivid joy serene,  
That lighted up these new-created men,  
Than that which wings th' exulting spirit clean,  
When, just deliver'd from this fleshly den,  
It soaring seeks its native skies agen :  
How light its essence! how unlogg'd its powers,  
Beyond the blazon of my mortal pen!  
E'en so we glad forsook these sinful bowers,  
E'en such enraptur'd life, such energy was ours.

## LXIV.

But far the greater part, with rage inflam'd,  
Dire-mutter'd curses, and blasphem'd high Jove:  
"Ye sons of hate!" they bitterly exclaim'd,  
"What brought you to this seat of peace and love?  
While with kind Nature, here amid the grove,  
We pass'd the harmless sabbath of our time,  
What to disturb it could, fell men, emove  
Your barbarous hearts? Is happiness a crime?  
Then do the fiends of hell rule in yon Heaven sub-  
lime."

## LXV.

"Impious wretches," quoth the Knight in wrath,  
"Your happiness behold!"—Then straight a wand  
He wav'd, an anti-magic power that hath,  
Truth from illusive falsehood to command.  
Sudden the landscape sinks on every hand ;  
The pure quick streams are marshy puddles found ;  
On baleful heaths the groves all blacken'd stand,  
And o'er the weedy, foul, abhorred ground,  
Snakes, adders, toads, each loathsome creature  
crawls around.

## LXVI.

And here and there, on trees by lightning scath'd,  
Unhappy wights who loathed life yhung ;  
Or, in fresh gore and recent murder bath'd,  
They weltring lay; or else, infuriate flung  
Into the gloomy flood, while ravens sung  
The funeral dirge, they down the torrent roll'd:  
These, by distemper'd blood to madness stung,  
Had doom'd themselves; whence oft, when night  
controll'd

The world, returning hither their sad spirits howl'd.

## LXVII.

Meantime a moving scene was open laid ;  
That lazar-house, I whilom in my lay  
Depainted have, its horrors deep-display'd,  
And gave unnumber'd wretches to the day,  
Who tossing there in squalid mis'ry lay.  
Soon as of sacred light th' unwonted smile  
Pour'd on these living catacombs its ray,  
Through the drear caverns stretching many a mile,  
The sick uprais'd their heads, and dropp'd their  
woes awhile.

## LXVIII.

"O heaven!" they cried, "and do we once more see  
Yon blessed sun, and this green earth so fair?  
Are we from noisome damps of pesthouse free?  
And drink our souls the sweet ethereal air?  
O thou! or Knight, or God! who holdest there  
That fiend, oh keep him in eternal chains!  
But what for us, the children of Despair,  
Brought to the brink of hell, what hope remains?  
Repentance does itself but aggravate our pains."

## LXIX.

The gentle Knight, who saw their rueful case,  
Let fall adown his silver beard some tears.  
"Certes," quoth he, "it is not c'en in grace  
T' undo the past, and eke your broken years :

Nathless, to nobler worlds Repentance rears,  
With humble hope, her eye ; to her is given  
A power the truly contrite hearts that cheers ;  
She quells the brand by which the rocks are riven ;  
She more than merely softens, she rejoices Heaven.

## LXX.

"Then patient bear the suff'rings you have earn'd,  
And by these suff'rings purify the mind ;  
Let wisdom be by past misconduct learn'd ;  
Or pious die, with penitence resign'd ;  
And to a life more happy and refin'd,  
Doubt not, you shall, new creatures, yet arise.  
Till then, you may expect in me to find  
One who will wipe your sorrow from your eyes,  
One who will soothe your pangs, and wing you to  
the skies."

## LXXI.

They silent heard, and pour'd their thanks in tears :  
"For you," resum'd the Knight with sterner tone,  
"Whose hard dry hearts th' obdurate demon sears,  
That villain's gifts will cost you many a groan ;  
In dolorous mansion long you must bemoan  
His fatal charms, and weep your stains away :  
Till, soft and pure as infant goodness grown,  
You feel a perfect change : then, who can say  
What grace may yet shine forth in Heaven's  
eternal day?"

## LXXII.

This said, his powerful wand he wav'd anew :  
Instant, a glorious angel-train descends,  
The Charities, to wit, of rosy hue ;  
Sweet love their looks a gentle radiance lends,  
And with seraphic flame compassion blends.  
At once, delighted, to their charge they fly :  
When lo! a goodly hospital ascends,  
In which they bade each lenient aid be nigh,  
That could the sick-bed smooth of that sad company.

## LXXIII.

It was a worthy edifying sight,  
And gives to human kind peculiar grace,  
To see kind hands attending day and night,  
With tender ministry, from place to place.  
Some prop the head ; some from the pallid face  
Wipe off the faint cold dews weak Nature sheds ;  
Some reach the healing draught: the whilst, to chase  
The fear supreme, around their soften'd beds,  
Some holy man by prayer all opening Heaven  
dispreps.

## LXXIV.

Attended by a glad acclaiming train,  
Of those he rescued had from gaping hell,  
Then turn'd the Knight ; and, to his hall again  
Soft-pacing, sought of peace the mossy cell :  
Yet down his cheeks the gems of pity fell,  
To see the helpless wretches that remain'd,  
There left through delves and deserts dire to yell ;  
Amaz'd, their looks with pale dismay were stain'd,  
And, spreading wide their hands, they meek re-  
pentance feign'd.

## LXXV.

But ah! their scorned day of grace was past :  
For (horrible to tell!) a desert wild  
Before them stretch'd, bare, comfortless, and vast ;  
With gibbets, bones, and carcases defil'd.  
There nor trim field, nor lively culture smil'd ;  
Nor waving shade was seen, nor fountain fair ;  
But sands abrupt on sands lay loosely piled, [care  
Through which they flound'ring toil'd with painful  
Whilst Phœbus smote them sore, and fired the  
cloudless air.

LXXVI.

Then, varying to a joyless land of bogs,  
The sadden'd country a grey waste appear'd,  
Where nought but putrid steams and noisome fogs  
For ever hung on drizzly Auster's beard;  
Or else the ground, by piercing Caurus sear'd,  
Was jagg'd with frost, or heap'd with glazed snow;  
Through these extremes a ceaseless round they  
By cruel fiends still hurried to and fro, [steer'd,  
Gaunt Beggary and Scorn, with many hell-hounds  
moe.

LXXVII.

The first was with base dunghill rags yelad,  
Tainting the gale, in which they flutter'd light;  
Of morbid hue his features, sunk and sad;  
His hollow eyne shook forth a sickly light;  
And o'er his lank jawbone, in piteous plight,  
His black rough beard was matted rank and vile;  
Direful to see! a heart-appalling sight!  
Meantime foul scurf and blotches him defile;  
And dogs, where'er he went, still barked all the  
while.

LXXVIII.

The other was a fell despicable fiend;  
Hell holds none worse in baleful bower below;  
By pride, and wit, and rage, and rancour, keen'd;  
Of man alike, if good or bad, the foe:  
With nose upturn'd he always made a show  
As if he smelt some nauseous scent; his eye  
Was cold and keen, like blast from boreal snow;  
And taunts he casten forth most bitterly.  
Such were the twain that off drove this ungodly fry.

LXXIX.

E'en so through Brentford town, a town of mud,  
A herd of bristly swine is prick'd along;  
The filthy beasts, that never chew the cud, [song,  
Still grunt, and squeak, and sing their troublous  
And oft they plunge themselves the mire among;  
But aye the ruthless driver goads them on,  
And aye of barking dogs the bitter throng  
Makes them renew their unmelodious moan;  
Ne ever find they rest from their unresting fone.

## GLOSSARY.

*Archimago*, the chief, or greatest of magicians and enchanters.

*Appaid*, paid.

*Appal*, affright.

*Atween*, between.

*Ay*, always.

*Bale*, sorrow, trouble, misfortune.

*Benempt*, named.

*Blazon*, painting, displaying.

*Breme*, cold, raw.

*Carol*, to sing songs of joy.

*Caurus*, the north-east wind.

*Certes*, certainly.

*Dan*, a word prefixed to names.

*Defly*, skilfully.

*Depainted*, painted.

*Drowsihead*, drowsiness.

*Eath*, easy.

*Eightoons*, immediately, often, afterwards.

*Eke*, also.

*Foue*, foes.

*G ar or Geer*, furniture, equipage, dress.

*Glaive*, sword. (Fr.)

*Glee*, joy, pleasure.

*Han*, have.

*Hight*, named, called: and sometimes it is used for *is called*. See c. i. s. ii.

*Idless*, idleness.

*Imp*, child or offspring; from the Saxon *impan*, to graft or plant.

*Kest*, for cast.

*Lad*, for led.

*Lea*, a piece of land or meadow.

*Libbard*, leopard.

*Lig*, to lie.

*Losel*, a loose idle fellow.

*Louting*, bowing, bending.

*Lithe*, loose, lax.

*Mell*, mingle.

*Moe*, more.

*Moll*, to labour.

*Mote*, might.

*Muchel* or *Mochel*, much, great.

*Nathless*, nevertheless.

*Ne*, nor.

*Nedments*, necessaries.

*Noursling*, a child that is nursed.

*Noyance*, harm.

*Prankt*, coloured, adorned gayly.

*Perdie* (Fr. par Dieu), an old oath.

*Pricked thro' the forest*, rode through the forest.

*Scar*, dry, burnt up.

*Sheen*, bright, shining.

*Sicker*, surely.

*Soot*, sweet, or sweetly.

*Sooth*, true or truth.

*Stound*, misfortune, pang.

*Sweltry*, sultry, consuming with heat.

*Swink*, to labour.

*Smackt*, savoured.

*Thrall*, slave.

*Transmew'd*, transformed.

*Unkempt* (Lat. incompustus), unadorned.

*Vild*, vile.

*Wcen*, to think, be of opinion.

*Wcet*, to know, to wct, to wit.

*Whilom*, ere-while, formerly.

*Wight*, man.

*Wis* for *Wist*, to know, think, understand.

*Wonne* (a noun), dwelling.

*Wroke*, wreakt.

N.B.—The letter Y is frequently placed in the beginning of a word by Spenser, to lengthen it a syllable; and *eo* at the end of a word for the same reason, as *withouten*, *casten*, &c.

*Yborn*, born.

*Yblent*, or *blent*, blended, mingled.

*Yclad*, clad.

*Ycleped*, called, named.

*Yfere*, together.

*Ymoltten*, melted.

*Yode* (preter tense of *yede*), went.

THE END.











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